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COMMENTARY

WASHINGTON: TARNISHED SYMBOL

Our Capital's Treason Against America

DAVID AND ADELE BERNSTEIN

WASHINGTON is a delightful capital, if you do not look too far under its glistening surface. It has the grandeur that the French architect l'Enfant envisaged a century and a half ago, leavened by leisurely residential neighborhoods and a faint fragrance of the old South. Someone has called it a city in the country; its air needs no filter against industrial grime.

OUR nation's capital still prides itself on a certain graciousness of architecture and manners which is said to be its heritage from the Old South. But it is no secret, either to Americans or to the world at large, that it just as jealously cherishes an uglier part of that same social tradition—racism. Indeed, the report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights last year devoted a special section to this fact, and the press continues to report incidents of Washington's discriminatory practices. DAVID and ADELE BERNSTEIN here offer a detailed account of the operation and background of Washington's race prejudice, suggesting what new factors in the city's life may yet operate for improvement. Mr. Bernstein, after serving with the American Army in the Pacific, became special adviser to the President of the Philippines; this experience formed the basis for a book, *The Philippine Story*, published last year. For the past few years Mr. Bernstein has lived in Washington, serving frequently as a consultant to the government. Mrs. Bernstein was for some time a staff writer for the *Washington Post*, covering, among other things, the capital's community life.

People like Washington because they can feel close to the heart of world affairs and yet lead an easy social life without night clubs or exhibitionistic spending. The pushing and striving of bigger cities is not for Washington; its shops are not so crowded, its sales clerks not so rude, and one need not plan for weeks ahead to arrange a picnic in Rock Creek Park or a boat trip on the Potomac.

Newcomers, who arrived with the New Deal or with the war, settle comfortably into permanent residence. They are the principal source of the unprecedented home-buying boom of the past five years. Since 1940, they have swelled the capital's population by more than thirty-five per cent, from 663,000 to 898,000.

Nothing like this influx has happened to Washington since the Civil War (an event which, incidentally, had less effect on the nation's capital than on the South, which begins just across the river). The city, then, is due for as much of a change in personality as it has increased in size. The change is, indeed, badly overdue.

UNDERLYING Washington the capital is Washington the community. This community has little to do with the city of headlines—of presidents, senators, diplomats, cabinet members, lobbyists, and all the oth-

ers who manage the business of government. It has little to do, either, with the Washington of the society pages—the official wives, the social climbers, the embassy set, the army set, the horsey set, the cocktail party deadbeats. Neither should it be confused with Hollywood's capital of giddy government girls, slinking spies, and handsome statesmen.

Washington the community is the city of the "Oldest Inhabitants," the people whose roots were sunk generations ago when their forebears arrived in town to cadge jobs in the bureaus or the homes of the Madisons and Lincolns and Grants. In their unostentatious, middle-class way, they run the city today. They are its police force, its shopkeepers, its motormen, teachers, bankers, doctors, and cab drivers. Inevitably, they set the standards for the community.

Interestingly enough, foreigners in the capital seem better acquainted than Americans with these standards: Washington's disfranchised citizenry; the ugly segregation of its people according to color; its restricted neighborhoods for Caucasian Christians, preferably Protestant; its infantile cultural development; its suspicion of outsiders and new ideas. These attributes of Washington strike the foreigner forcibly because he sees, as an outsider, the contrast between America's protestations in her propaganda abroad and America's performance in her own capital; and also because the foreigner is sometimes in the victim's place himself.

A few weeks ago, the Minister from Ethiopia attended a convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Science at Constitution Hall (owned and run by the Daughters of the American Revolution), and was asked to change his seat. He assumed that he was being subjected to racial discrimination, and left the hall in a huff that reached the newspapers and distressed the State Department. As it turned out, there had merely been a ticket mix-up. But in no other capital of the world, except perhaps South Africa's Pretoria, would he automatically have assumed

segregation. In Washington it could be taken for granted.

IT COULD be taken for granted, because discrimination and narrow-minded parochialism surround all people in Washington, however transient. The city's one legitimate theater was changed this year into a segregated movie house because its owner, Marcus Heiman, rejected a demand from Actors' Equity that he admit Negroes to his audiences.

The heart of the community, which supported Mr. Heiman, is found in a dozen or so little-known neighborhood "citizens' associations"—Brightwood, Glover Park, Anacostia, Georgetown, Kalorama—all affiliated with the city-wide and all-white Federation of Citizens' Associations. These neighborhood groups are tightly controlled by the proper Washingtonians, and are in fact highly successful in getting the city more traffic lights, improved sewage systems and police protection, planned parking areas, and contributions to the Community Chest.

They also uphold restrictive covenants barring Negroes, Jews, Indians, or Orientals as home-owners in their sections. Last October, before the Supreme Court had handed down its decision outlawing these covenants, Clifford H. Newell, president of the Federation of Citizens' Associations, told one of the neighborhood groups: "If a colored person is unwise enough to move into your block, don't sell your home and move away. Social custom will assert itself, and I predict that after this agitation has expended itself, the colored man will want to sell back to his white friend and go back to live among his own people, where he can better carry out his obligations to his race."

This astonishing statement was followed by a still more astonishing proposal which Mr. Newell devised after the Supreme Court had acted in despite of Washington's "social custom." Addressing the entire Federation in June, he outlined a scheme to "replace" the now unenforceable covenants. On each block, one resident selected by the neighborhood association would hold

options to buy at the bid price any property put up for sale by its owner. Thus, once a home-owner had found a buyer, the "block captain" would have thirty days to investigate his prospective neighbor and, if he considered him undesirable, he could exercise his option and prevent the sale of the house. The plan, said Mr. Newell, "cannot be attacked" because "it makes no mention of race, creed, or color."

The ingenious proper Washingtonians support and, if necessary, enforce the exclusion of Negro children from any playgrounds and schools not specifically assigned to them. Negro facilities are notoriously inadequate in quality and number. But the Washingtonians who dominate the District of Columbia school board and recreation board will assure you that, dollar for dollar, the Negroes receive far more in benefits than they contribute to the District revenues. They have declared that local crime (the figures for which are soaring) is aggravated because outsiders provoke the Negro to violence. They point to the abnormally high Negro contribution to the city's venereal disease rate. It never occurs to them that their own attitude has helped create these statistics. This is their city and they mean to keep it that way, come Roosevelt, come Dewey.

AS FOR the newcomers, the Roosevelt horde or the prospective Dewey horde, they must pretend to ignore the community. But they are forced to accept it as it is—at least until they or their children become proper Washingtonians themselves.

Meantime, the housing shortage forces them to buy or rent homes in restricted neighborhoods, and the inevitable embarrassment damages relations with their Jewish friends. Their children go to segregated schools and playgrounds, and the insidious clichés of prejudice and superiority seep in unnoticed. They patronize restaurants that bar Negroes, and movie theaters that Negroes cannot enter. They travel on the streetcars and buses of the Capital Transit Company, which employs Negroes only as track

hands. Only when they walk into a government building do they leave the community and enter the world in which they believe.

Here, white and black stenographers, researchers, clerks, and analysts may sit side by side, receiving equal pay for equal work. Here the government cafeterias are crowded each noon with patrons white and black, served by waitresses white and black. True, it takes the average Negro employe seven times as long to get a promotion in government service as it takes the average white employe; and only rarely is a Negro found in any really high post. But at least the fiction, and sometimes the fact, of equality is present—guaranteed by law. Even in the staid old State Department, it was possible for a Ralph Bunche to rise rapidly before he was lent to the United Nations.

When his day ends, the average white government worker returns to his closely covenanted neighborhood and his community dominated by the old-timers. The government-employed Negro goes home into the same community. He steps out of the world of potential equality and back into the Washington of rigid inequality. What the psychological effect of this abrupt daily change may be, even a layman can imagine. What it means to the community as a whole, however, only the social scientist can say.

For several years, we lived in a small house in the residential neighborhood of Georgetown—one of the many areas where population trends have been reversed, with white newcomers pushing Negroes out of their homes. Our street was a mixed one. Near us lived a young Negro woman who laundered her blouses and underthings each evening at a cold-water tap in the back yard, just beyond her outdoor privy. She could not find a better place to live. But in the government, she rated a secretary (white) and a certain degree of prestige, for she held an information job in one of the war agencies. As soon as the war ended, she hurried back to New York.

She could not remain in this city which

holds two annual marbles tournaments, one for white children and one for Negro children. The winners never play against each other; instead, the white victor is automatically declared "champion," and the Negro child is always "runner-up." She knew that she, too, could never be anything but runner-up.

The statistics on racial discrimination in the nation's capital warranted a special section in the report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights last year. "Negro schools," it said, "are inferior to white schools in almost every respect. The white school buildings have a capacity which is 27 per cent greater than actual enrollment. In the colored schools, enrollment exceeds building capacity by 8 per cent." (During the war, the OPA asked permission to use a school building at night for in-service training of its clerks. The request was denied solely because the class would have included both white and colored employees.)

As to housing, the President's Committee reported that "70 per cent of the inhabitants of the city's three worst slum areas are Negroes," and added: "The largest single slum in the District houses about 7 per cent of the white and 30 per cent of the Negro population. In 1940, one-eighth of the white dwellings in Washington and 40 per cent of those occupied by Negroes were substandard; 15 per cent of white-occupied and 38 per cent of Negro-occupied dwellings had more than one person per room."

(The cold-water, outdoor-privy Georgetown dwelling from which our Negro neighbor moved was promptly remodelled by its white owner, and rented at a high price to white tenants. The all-white Washington Real Estate Board has a "code of ethics"—unchanged by Supreme Court decisions—which prohibits its members from selling land in predominantly white areas to Negroes, and the realtors are supported in this practice by non-member dealers, banks, and loan companies. Two of the city's newspapers will not accept ads offering

property in white areas for sale to Negroes.)

In hotels, restaurants, theaters, even hospitals, foreign officials who are mistaken for American Negroes are often refused admission. "However," concludes the Committee's report, with noteworthy restraint, "once it is established that they are not Americans, they are accommodated."

Every third person in the District of Columbia is a Negro, and it is abundantly plain that this is the real reason why all Washingtonians are denied the right of self-government, of voting for President, or of being represented in Congress. The proper Washingtonians, who vigorously oppose home rule, are backed by a knot of Southern congressmen who make it their business to attend to the capital's communal affairs.

Currently the city is managed by a Board of Commissioners appointed by the President; its budget and tax structure are fixed by Congress; its five separate police forces are staffed by federal employees. Its "mayor" is a senator or representative heading a congressional District Committee, one of the least desirable (because least vote-catching) jobs on the Hill; for years, Washington's mayor was the ineffable Mr. Bilbo. The District, in other words, has less responsible or democratic government than any United States possession or even than occupied Japan or Germany.

This year an excellent bill for municipal self-government, drawn up by a Republican representative from New Jersey, died in the House amid a morass of ignorance, suspicion, and lack of interest as to its contents. The quality of its very active opposition—moved by fear of the Washington newcomers and, above all, of the Negroes—was made clear enough by Representative James C. Davis of Georgia, who said:

"Washington is a gathering-place of radicals, Communists, near-Communists, and riffraff of all types and kinds. To put the operation of the seat of the United States government into the hands of radicals who are always alert to exercise the voting privi-

lege, when good people are indifferent, would create a situation that would be intolerable. If we ever put the government here into the hands of the people who would run it under home rule, the nation's capital wouldn't be fit for a buzzard to fly over."

Nor much more than three percent of the District's population, according to current estimates, is Jewish. This small Jewish group, quite naturally, has adopted the pattern of the whole community. There are the Jewish proper Washingtonians, and there are the Jewish newcomers.

This does not mean that the older Jewish families have all integrated themselves thoroughly among the other old-timers. Washingtonians do not assimilate that easily; it would not be proper. What has happened instead, is that there has developed a certain recognition that each group, whether Jewish or Catholic or whatever, has its definite place in the community. At the top, there are the occasional figures of Jews active in the general community (usually lawyers or merchants), but on the normal middle-class level there is a quiet but firm intention of keeping to one's own kind.

Inevitably, however, the habits, the shibboleths, and the prejudices of the community have been absorbed by the Jews who are rooted in the capital. Prejudice against Negroes is as casual and common among them as it is among non-Jews. Discrimination against Negroes is as widespread among Jewish as among Christian real-estate men. Indeed, most Washingtonians believe that some of the larger and more successful Jewish realtors even discriminate quietly against Jews. Usually these rumors resist proof, although the suspicion persists.

As for anti-Semitism, it is a low-pressure tension in Washington—possibly because the high-pressure of the Negro problem satisfies most of the need for bigotry. True, there are several large stores which apparently dislike to employ Jews; and there are even one or two old-line government agencies which have the same reputation. True, too, covenants

make home-buying difficult for Jews in many districts; and several of the most desirable apartment houses cringe at the suggestion that any of their tenants might be Jews.

But, by and large, Washington's anti-Semitism is of the xenophobic kind. It is part of the community's suspicion of all outsiders, whether foreigners, Northerners, or red Indians.

For the Jewish newcomers, of course, this is hardly satisfying. So, to a large extent they refrain from the specifically Jewish communal activities; and, where they do participate, it is generally in the attempt to combat the prejudices of the proper Washingtonians—an attempt which makes the Jewish old-timers, with a few exceptions, exceedingly unhappy.

Significantly, a great many of the city's most prominent and active liberals are Jews; almost all came as public servants in government shortly before and during the war; and they have remained as progressive influences in the community itself, to play a role in changing the pattern long accepted as natural by those who were here first.

IF RACIAL discrimination is the capital's ugliest characteristic, it is by no means the only cause of psychological difficulty in Washington. Few types of employment are completely free of frustration and tension, but government service is in these respects among the worst.

Changes in hierarchy, switches in policy, budget and personnel cuts, all generate insecurity among government workers. Your typical civil servant is an unhappy kind of person—the small-town girl who sought glamor but found instead the monotony of the typewriter and the lonely rinsing of stockings each evening at her boarding house; the junior executive who breezed in with youthful New Deal zest, but is smothered now by an inflexible "job description" and the morning car-pool ride from a standardized suburban development in Maryland or Virginia; the high-level career official who approaches a middle age compounded of ulcers, congressional inquisitions, and long

evening bouts with a briefcase full of papers from the office. The heart has simply gone out of public service since the fervent days of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the war years. Few people in Washington expect the new President to restore the old zeal and excitement.

Currently, of course, the loyalty scare is the most destructive of all influences. Obviously it is necessary to make sure that the government employs no Communist party members or others whose first loyalty is to a foreign state. But, in the process of making sure, an unnecessary sense of fear has been spread through every level of government service, and has touched many thousands of non- or anti-Communist liberals. In some ways it reminds one of the atmosphere among non-Communist government officials in Prague since the coup—the fear of association with possible suspects who once were friends, the reexamination of one's past life for slips and chinks, the independent or critical ideas that go unuttered.

It is an atmosphere of hysteria which, once again, strikes the foreign visitor more forcibly than the American. A friend from London, in Washington for a few days, asked wonderingly, "What are you all afraid of? You don't really believe the Communists will take over your country, do you? Why don't you have more confidence in your own strength—and in the way of life you are broadcasting to the world?"

What he did not understand was that the fear in Washington is not so much of a Communist fifth column as of a wolf pack of politicking Congressmen. One of Mr. Dewey's first jobs will be to restore self-confidence to government workers. And it will not be easy, for there are many in his own party who hold a deep-seated suspicion of anyone on the public payroll—especially anyone who has been there during the sixteen years of Roosevelt and Truman.

So, today, it is perfectly safe to express the narrowest reactionary opinion in Washington, even to the point of un-Americanism from the Right. But it is by no means safe to talk freely in favor of civil rights, for

example, unless you are sure everyone else in the room is friendly.

Marquis Childs described recently how one government employee was brought before his department's loyalty board on charges of guilt by association—charges of which he was subsequently cleared. During the questioning he was asked whether he had made any contributions to philanthropic causes. He mentioned that he had given two hundred and fifty dollars to the United Jewish Appeal. At this a board member said, "Don't you know this shows almost too much zeal for the underdog?"

Most manifestations of the new Washington hysteria may not be quite so objectionable, but they are no less dangerous in their implications. A military intelligence officer, lecturing army reserve officers recently, stated categorically that liberalism, being "rationalistic and materialistic," is a blood-brother of Communism and therefore sinister. A one-time Western liberal, now with a hush-hush government agency, told us that he is inclined to agree with the personnel policy in his office, which virtually shuts the door to eligible American citizens whose parents were born abroad. An American Jew, just back from two years in Berlin, defended the unwritten policy which forbids the renewal of military government contracts with citizens naturalized less than ten years ago—meaning, specifically, German refugees.

Now, this frame of mind has nothing to do with Republican or Democratic party lines. It is doubtful that Mr. Dewey, if he were aware of these instances, would acknowledge ideological kinship with their implications. But it is evident that there is less independent and courageous thinking in official Washington today than at any time since the spring of 1933. This can have unfortunate effects on high-level government policy and on the Hill. Thus, it may have been pressure from the executive branch—as well as from the public—that caused Congress to consider legislation to admit DP's into the United States last winter. But, significantly enough, by sum-

merit the executive pressure had slackened, and Senator Revercomb's bill came out in the end with clear anti-Jewish and anti-Catholic overtones. Is it possible that government officials were hesitating to show almost too much zeal for the underdog?

THE restoration of self-assurance to government officials is, at least in theory, a task that could be carried out swiftly and effectively by the new Dewey administration. But no executive fiat will sweeten the community itself. That is a job for time—and for the newcomers, the immigrants into old Washington from the forty-eight states.

The arrival of the Republicans will not mean a mass exodus from the capital. Only the top officials will go, though the high-level shake-ups will undoubtedly be followed by a slower interchange of jobs lower down the scale. Thousands of Democratic office-holders, however, will either continue with the government or, as many have already done, set themselves up in the professions which feed on government—law, lobbying, public relations, trade association work, and the like. To the extent that they are here for good, they have already begun to change the face of the community. Inevitably they will begin to take a more active role on what is called, in government gobbledygook, the "local level."

Their impact is already discernible in little, unrevolutionary ways. Early this fall, for example, the city's Gallinger Hospital—hitherto restricted to white doctors—agreed to admit Negro internes from Howard Uni-

versity medical school, along with Negro attending physicians and a Negro member for the hospital's executive committee.

This year also saw the first instance of mixed boxing in the Golden Gloves and other amateur tournaments in the city (the national finals, held elsewhere, have never been segregated). Uline Arena, Washington's minor-scale Madison Square Garden, for the first time has opened its doors to Negro spectators and participants for all sports, including community ice skating. The first motion picture theater to admit patrons without segregation opened this year, as did the American Veterans Committee's non-segregated club house.

Slowly and surely, the newcomers are working themselves into Washington's civic life. They are drifting into the citizens' associations in their neighborhoods, though that takes considerable courage in the face of hostility and suspicion from the old-timers. As members of consumers' groups, of the vigorously anti-Communist Washington chapter of the American Veterans Committee, of the Americans for Democratic Action, and of other organizations, they are beginning to do battle for home rule, for breaking down restrictive practices and discriminations.

In the end, they will become old-timers themselves, and, by bringing into the mustiness of the traditional Washington the fresher winds that blow on the national scene, they may help to make Washington the community somewhat more worthy of Washington the capital.

BERNADOTTE'S TESTAMENT

An Analysis of the Mediator's Recommendations

ROBERT WELTSCH

THE first document from Palestine to reach the UN Assembly in Paris after Bernadotte's Report—or testament—was a cable from Dr. Bunche, the acting Mediator, charging the government of Israel with responsibility for the Count's assassination. The crime had been committed in territory explicitly assigned to Israeli jurisdiction. This cable was greatly resented in Israeli circles, but it is difficult to imagine what else Bernadotte's temporary successor could have said. The fault did not lie with him—he had to do his duty by making a report—but in the outrage itself.

The Stern gang claimed the "merit" of the murder, and the Israeli government took vigorous action against it, but people in the UN still wondered whether the local authorities on the spot had not shown negligence in face of the open threats made against Bernadotte by the terrorists. And surprise was expressed that the government had not accompanied its condemnation of the crime with some immediate and drastic gesture such as the suspension—at least temporarily—of the

ROBERT WELTSCH, life-long Zionist and one of Palestine's most distinguished journalists, here analyzes the recommendations of the Bernadotte Plan, which are now being debated in the United Nations Security Council, and the issues they pose for the settlement of the Arab-Jewish conflict, and the future of Israel. Dr. Weltsch needs little introduction to COMMENTARY readers: his several articles on the developing Palestine situation at various critical junctures during the past two years have established his expertness, sensitivity, and fairness as a political analyst. Born in Prague in 1891, Dr. Weltsch was for almost twenty years editor of the *Juedische Rundschau*, official organ of the Zionist Organization in Germany. Since 1938, he has made his home in Palestine. His most recent article, "What Chance for Arab-Jewish Accord?" appeared in the July COMMENTARY.

PARIS

officials responsible for public safety in the area affected, or an investigation of responsibility on higher levels. In some UN delegations it was even murmured after a while that the measures taken to seek out the assassins were perhaps inadequate.

SO FAR as the Palestine issue was concerned, four new facts confronted the UN Assembly as it began its session in Paris: Bernadotte's death; the report he had signed before he died; the general understanding that partition was an accomplished fact, with the state of Israel a firmly established reality; and the apparent understanding reached by the British and American governments on a common line of policy in Palestine.

An excellent analysis, based on apparently reliable high sources, of this newly achieved Anglo-American harmony was given by Hal Lehrman in the September COMMENTARY. Two months later, as far as we know in London or Paris, there is hardly anything to add to it. The ten points of the agreement, as enumerated by Mr. Lehrman, roughly correspond to the policy outlined in the Bernadotte plan. This could, however, be pure coincidence; if a compromise had to be found, it would obviously have had to be on approximately these lines. The close correspondence between the agreement and the Bernadotte plan need not be taken as evidence that Bernadotte himself was a mouthpiece of Anglo-American policy. And even if this were so, it would be no crime. No lasting settlement of any kind can be effected in Palestine without the support of the two great powers that for the time being are more or less responsible for the maintenance of political stability in the Middle East. Palestine cannot be isolated, and it was only realism to reflect in recommended policy the

fact that the new state needed active aid as well as Platonic recognition from America and Britain.

Both Marshall and Bevin hurried to declare their acceptance of the Bernadotte Report in its entirety. The London *Times* hailed "the new broad understanding reached by Britain and the United States on team-work to secure the common Anglo-American interest of peace in the Middle East." And "this understanding," the *Times* added, "is hardly second in importance to the emergence of Israel as one of the factors that make the prospects of a peaceful solution in Palestine more hopeful now than at any time since last November." Anglo-American harmony has from the first been an essential requirement for the successful settlement of the Palestine conflict, and much of the misfortune that has visited Palestine during the past two or three years must be ascribed to the discord between these two powers. Thus it would be a considerable step forward if Anglo-American differences over Palestine were definitely ironed out. This is all the more true in view of the present impotence of the United Nations.

The main paradox underlying the present stage of the Palestine conflict—as, indeed, it does the whole world situation—is the fiction that the final decision rests with the UN. While all participants, and especially the great powers, are under no illusion as to the efficiency of UN procedure, and nobody feels that it can exert real power, they cling nevertheless to the principle of using its machinery. Yet events cannot always wait for a UN decision, and still less for the necessary means to be provided for carrying it out once it is reached. This has created a danger—foreshadowed by some increasingly contemptuous Jewish statements about the UN—that the conviction will take root in the minds of the peoples most concerned that the UN is utterly helpless and will yield finally to whoever proves the stronger force in Palestine. It is easy to draw the conclusion—and it is apparently a popular one in some Jewish circles—that a *fait accompli* is the only argument that counts.

But this state of affairs cannot go on for ever.

If Anglo-American accord on Palestine, now deemed possible, survives the discussion of the Bernadotte Report, then it will undoubtedly, as the *Times* said, become one of the most important factors of all towards a solution of the problem. Britain and the United States together could put the house in order even though the United Nations continued its inactivity. The Bernadotte Report, described now as a "basis for discussion," may be the first step toward reviving that sense of basic responsibility which for too long languished behind the curtain of endless UN discussions.

THE most striking feature of the Bernadotte Report is, in essence, the admission that "mediation" in the strict meaning of the term has failed. Mediation means the exploration of the views and demands of both sides, and then the bringing together of both parties on a common compromise program. Bernadotte was in search of what he called "a common denominator," but he had, alas, to report that "there was, at least for the time being, no prospect of voluntary agreement between the disputants." This is a clear statement of failure. But quite rightly Bernadotte did not draw the conclusion that his whole mission had failed. "Mediation" had not worked, but the precarious truce still persisted and the advantages to both sides of avoiding large-scale hostilities seemed to be tacitly understood. The restoration of peace in Palestine now depended on the intervention of a third factor with undisputed authority and possessing the means to impose its decision. Bernadotte declared that he sensed "a more moderate and reasonable atmosphere in all quarters," which he apparently took to confirm his view that a settlement could be achieved by tacit agreement "if the General Assembly should reach firm and equitable decisions on the principal political issues." This "if" is, however, the crux of the whole matter.

Count Bernadotte rediscovered an old truth—that a peaceful solution in Palestine

would be possible only if a settlement based on equity and a true evaluation of the realities, and regarded as bearable by the majority of the people—though not necessarily by extremists—were imposed by an outside power. All the old proposals—a bi-national state, federalization, cantonization, partition—assumed the presence of a third force willing to supervise, guarantee, and, if necessary, enforce these schemes. Without such a force, the whole of any one of them breaks down. Now Bernadotte had to appeal for that third force to the UN, who had sent him as the British had sent Peel, Woodhead, and the Singleton-Hutcheson Committee. True, the UN has a far less clear-cut responsibility than did Britain. But if the way is not found for the UN to respond to the call, then the philosophy of the *fait accompli* will receive full sanction.

Count Bernadotte seems to have been completely aware of the weakness of his position. He had to form his opinion on a possible settlement as he went along and in accordance with the facts at any given moment. In his first proposals, submitted to both parties on June 27, he still based his hopes on the principle of union, which had been an essential part of the decision of November 29. He made the fatal mistake of suggesting the inclusion of Jerusalem in Arab territory, instead of insisting on its preservation as a *corpus separatum*, and possibly as the capital of the proposed union. However, he had not yet envisaged the division of the country into two separate parts without common links. But then, when the Security Council did not act to make union a reality, Bernadotte rightly came to the conclusion that it was an unfeasible scheme that had to be dropped. It became clear to him that "any plan based on the essential assumption of immediate cooperation between Arabs and Jews must ignore the harsh facts of the existing relationship there." In another section of his report he added: "... however desirable a political and economic union might be in Palestine, the time is certainly not now propitious for the effectuation of any such scheme."

By abandoning this essential point of the resolution of November 29 as unfeasible, Bernadotte practically relinquished the whole previous Assembly scheme—a scheme that had always been regarded as an indivisible entity. Here he concurred with all those who do not want to stick to the letter of the old resolution.

Count Bernadotte's attitude was the result of painfully acquired experience. It can be criticized by those who still believe that some kind of union or federation will prove the most desirable solution in the long run (though some hold the view, too—and it is a sadder one—that union may be created later, not by voluntary federation, but by the dictation of a conqueror). The dropping of "union" does not mean that the idea was originally ill-conceived; but even the most ardent champion of Jewish-Arab cooperation will have to admit, however reluctantly, that at the present juncture hope for a settlement based on Arab-Jewish cooperation and on union or federation is mere quixotry.

There was no prospect that the Arabs would recognize the Jewish state, and on the other hand Bernadotte himself reached the conclusion that abolition of the Jewish state was unfeasible. His tempered "optimism" was founded on his impression that prominent and influential leaders of the Arab League had begun to realize the true situation. They made him believe that a peaceful adjustment would be possible if a plan were proposed that could be represented to the Arabs as embodying an improvement or concession and which would at least meet in some respects what the Arabs call "the requirements of justice." At the same time strong pressure in support of the scheme would have to come from the United Nations, so that Arab leaders could say to the Arab masses that overwhelming international pressure had compelled them to submit. Although the Arab leaders could never admit safely that they had lost the war with the Jews, they could, with far less loss of prestige, explain that they were unable to wage a war against a united front of the strongest organizations, and one, moreover, of which

the Arab states themselves were members.

ONE of the striking features of the Bernadotte Report, as distinguished from his earlier recommendations, is its unequivocal recognition of the Jewish state. This is a decisive change that opens the way to the universal recognition of Israel, and as a result, to her membership in the United Nations. The Report shows that its author was deeply impressed by the Jewish achievement and received what he calls a "convincing demonstration of their [the Jews'] skill and tenacity." This statement led to one of the most sensational turnabouts in the Palestine situation: Mr. Bevin declared in the House of Commons that Great Britain would accept the judgment of the Mediator and recognize Israel if the United Nations Assembly endorsed his report. Moreover, the British government and press have now begun to try to persuade the Arabs to reconcile themselves to the fact of the Jewish state. All this amounts to a moral victory for Israel. The London *Economist* believes that "a great majority of the Jews would have thought themselves lucky if they had been offered as much at any time before military success turned their heads."

Zionism has in fact achieved a complete victory as far as the principle of the Jewish state is concerned. The result has been bitter Arab criticism of British policy. Nor is this the first time, say the Arabs, that the British have completely betrayed them; though outwardly professing opposition to partition, it was Britain that actually contributed most to its implementation, they complain. And they go on to say that there is one thing "which a British recognition [of Israel] would do, and do irremediably, and that is to destroy what remains of friendly relations between Britain and the Arab world and to slam the door violently on any hope of future improvement in these relations." The Arabs oppose the Bernadotte Report above all because of its failure to place any limitations on the sovereignty of Israel. If the British government subscribed to such a settlement, "they would be doing the very

thing which they said they would not do, and once more the Arabs would feel that Britain had deceived them by their words and betrayed them by their actions."

Count Bernadotte apparently believed that the acceptance of the first partition plan would have been the best policy for the Arabs. This is implied in his remark that the Arab states "made a tragic mistake in employing force in Palestine." In this respect he accepts the Jewish view. As the Jewish state could only be eliminated by force and as the United Nations decreed that force must not be employed, there remains no other course for the Arabs than to accept the Jewish state. Bernadotte stated in strong terms that this issue had now been decided. The Arab idea of a "unitary Arab State" in Palestine he called "unrealistic." He dismissed equally, as impracticable under present circumstances, all cantonal or federal schemes and other forms of unity.

On the other hand, he made a strong plea for a better understanding of the Arab attitude. He appealed to the Jews of Israel to appreciate Arab views and fears—especially their fear of violent Jewish expansion as the result of pressure created by unlimited immigration. He also pointed out that the Arabs look upon the Jews as interlopers and aggressors who want to deprive them of the country in which they have lived for centuries. However, under the present political tension, with Arab bombs and shells falling on the Jewish civilian population of Jerusalem and with military victory seemingly the only decision, one could hardly expect readiness for such heart-searching on the Jewish side. As a matter of fact, the only notable answer to Bernadotte's plea that I saw in the Hebrew press was a fervent article by Martin Buber, in *Baayot Ha-zman*, warning Jews rather wrathfully not to overdo their talk of Arab "aggression" and to realize that the average Arab regards the Jews as intruders and therefore the aggressors. This hostile feeling is perhaps inevitable in view of the objective situation, Dr. Buber writes; but it could have been avoided if the Jews had in the past created a more substantial community of in-

terest with the Arabs than they did, or really tried to do.

THE Bernadotte Report was a surprise to the Jewish side because of its unreserved support of the Jewish state. Those who had expected something on the lines of his earlier proposals of June 27 noticed a change of mind outspokenly favorable to the Jews. One even heard the occasional remark that "he did not deserve death for this report."

As a realist Bernadotte interpreted his task as an effort to help both parties find a solution in accordance with the given realities. What could not be changed had to be accepted as a decisive factor even though one did not like it; otherwise programs would float in the air like desert mirages. Neither wishful thinking nor the rigid application of cleverly devised schemes, however just they might appear, could lead to a solution if realities were disregarded. This is the fundamental conviction and underlying philosophy of the Bernadotte Report and it is this that the report tries to impress on the parties concerned. The Mediator's political realism was such that several times, when he became aware that the realities themselves had changed, he did not hesitate to change his own views.

Yet it is clear that such an approach has its own inherent weakness. It arouses a great temptation to create *faits accomplis* by force or other means, so that new, realistic facts may influence the final decision. This diminishes the effectiveness of moral claims and of international judgment. But the fault here did not lie with the late Mediator. His attitude simply reflected the fact that the United Nations is not actually what it is supposed to be. As long as the decisions of the United Nations remain mere Platonic recommendations and no machinery exists for their implementation, the sole deterrent to a policy of *faits accomplis* will be the fear of encountering insuperable force on the other side. And as things are, conquest (and defeat) is still the shaping force of political reality.

It is, therefore, only logical that one of the first paragraphs of the Bernadotte Report

should say that the United Nations resolution of November 29, 1947, had been "irrevocably revised by the actual facts of recent Palestine history." This is an enlightening and undoubtedly true estimate of the situation, but it also implies the admission that accomplished facts are stronger than any verbal decision by an international authority. The Mediator pointed out that the Jewish state had become "a living, solidly entrenched and vigorous reality," and he added that the state was born "like many another state in history, in violence and bloodshed." He made it clear that the Jewish state was a reality that could be eliminated only by a superior force—a force such as all the Arab states together could not muster. He also seems to imply that if such a force were available to the other side, the destruction of the Jewish state would become a real possibility. But, in effect, the Mediator viewed the likelihood of international intervention as almost negligible.

So, on the whole, Bernadotte accepted the decision of the sword as a natural event with many precedents. His proposed boundaries were more or less based on what was then the actual division of the country by force of arms. Apart from Jerusalem, he drew the map roughly according to the military frontlines. Consequently, he gave the Jews Galilee and the Arabs the Negev. There is no indication as to whether Bernadotte regarded this partition as "just" or "unjust." As a mediator seeking a way out of an impasse without employing force, he had to start from the *status quo*. It would have been futile, for example, to suggest that certain armies evacuate areas they actually held, if you could not expect them to do so voluntarily and at the same time there were no military force available prepared to drive them out.

Contrary to his own earlier viewpoint, the Mediator also accepted the Jewish suggestion that immigration was a matter subject solely to the sovereign jurisdiction of the Jewish state. He confined himself to a very mild and vague appeal to the Jews "to take carefully into account the basis of Arab fears, and to consider measures and policies de-

signed to allay them." He did not specify what these measures might be. He considered the Arab fears extravagant but demanded that "every reasonable reassurance possible" be afforded them, not only by Israel, but also by the United Nations.

The only issue on which Bernadotte used strong language was the Arab refugees. He regarded it as undeniable that "no settlement can be just and complete if recognition is not accorded to the right of the Arab refugee to return to the home from which he has been dislodged." A denial of this right would be "an offence against the principles of elemental justice." And Israel's obligation to restore Arab property and indemnify Arab owners for property wantonly destroyed is taken as a matter of course (although the procedure for reclaiming such property might in many cases frustrate that effort). But Bernadotte knew that the content of this statement of principle and recognition of right was only theoretical. The majority of the refugees no longer have homes to return to. Although he seemed reluctant to admit it, the Count apparently could not escape the conclusion that the resettlement of the refugees in other Arab countries with the help of UN might be the only practicable remedy.

Nevertheless, it is refreshing to hear Bernadotte assert the "unconditional right to make a free choice," whether to return or to find a new home. In our present world, where in many places the individual has again become a helpless slave of the state, his "free choice" is not always taken for granted.

Whatever the original intentions of Zionism, with its frequent proclamations of the equality of all citizens without difference of race or religion, and whatever the reasons for the Arab flight, the practical result has been such as to confirm the warnings of Arab nationalists that Zionism would drive the Arabs out of Palestine. This is an experience not easily forgotten and it is capable of breeding racial hatred for generations. Thus, aside from the humanitarian obligation to remedy a horrible tragedy, prudence would seem to dictate that Israel do everything in her power

to alleviate the situation of these Arab victims of war.

WHILE the Arabs concentrate their opposition (quite unrealistically, in Bernadotte's view) on the principle of the Jewish state, Jewish criticism is mainly directed against the Count's proposed frontiers. The most important points of controversy are Jerusalem and the Negev. Jewish spokesmen invoke the UN decision of November 29, which in Bernadotte's view has been "outrun and irrevocably revised by the actual facts of recent Palestine history." Although, according to his report, the Provisional Government of Israel has modified its attitude to the resolution of November 29, even in respect to the fixing of boundaries, it still firmly contests the validity of the resolution as far as the Negev is concerned.

The whole question of the frontiers is clouded to a large extent by propaganda. Bernadotte's suggestion that the Negev be included in the Arab state, while the Jews receive the whole of Galilee, aroused a storm of indignation in the Jewish camp. The protests were, of course, directed against the cutting off of the Negev; but in order to make them more emphatic, the fullest scorn was simultaneously expressed for the "compensation" offered by Bernadotte. The American Zionist Emergency Council complained that "a mere 420 square miles of rocky and hilly Western Galilee" was all that was to be added to the Jewish state. On the other hand, the semi-official Arab News Bulletin vehemently criticized the plan because its "recommendation that the Arabs should have the Negev and the Jews the whole of Western Galilee, means in fact that the Jews would gain a rich, thickly populated new region in return for what is largely a desert." It must be admitted that the Arab evaluation of Galilee was the more correct one. Western Galilee is one of the loveliest and most fertile parts of the country, abundant in water and vegetation and undoubtedly suitable for the most intensive cultivation. True, the question of Galilee and the Negev is closely linked with the major issue of the "ex-

change of populations"—generally referred to as "the Arab refugee problem"—but nobody can deny that Galilee is the jewel of the whole of Palestine.

The problem of the Negev is certainly the most complicated of all. No ordinary mortal can honestly decide whether or not a dense colonization of the Negev is attainable in an economical way within a foreseeable time. Some agricultural experts of worldwide fame say yes. But apart from this technical question, there are other important issues involved. There is, for instance, Israel's "negative" interest in seeing that this vast, if arid, strip of land does not fall into the hands of a power that might use it as a springboard for war against Israel. It is perhaps not a question so much of "living space" as of moving space—a question, namely, of the control of the land-bridge and communications between the Mediterranean and the Dead and Red Seas. And there is also the possibility of deposits of oil and other minerals in the Negev. All these considerations make its possession highly desirable to the Arabs as well as the Jews.

From the point of view of "progress," a very strong case can be made out for the inclusion of the Negev in Israeli territory. Certainly, the Jews have the willingness and capacity to develop its resources in the most efficient way possible and it is only they who are really interested in turning this desert into cultivable land. The assertion often heard that the Negev would hold "millions" of Jewish immigrants may be exaggerated, but if American Jews, and possibly American Gentiles, were actually prepared to invest for a long term huge amounts of money in a comprehensive irrigation system on the lines of that sketched out in the Jordan Valley Authority project, then the Negev, and particularly its northern part, could probably be made cultivable to a certain extent, although whether such a project, even under state control, could pay its way in the end does not yet seem to be assured. In any event great practical results in a short time are hardly to be expected from the colonization of the Negev. But it is beyond any doubt that if

anything in this direction is done, there is nobody to do it except the Jews. That is a very strong argument, especially when the Arabs themselves admit, as the Lebanese delegate, Charles Malik (now chairman of the Third Committee of the UN), did in Paris, that the Middle East is a backward part of the world that urgently needs development.

THE strategic importance of the Negev, except in a limited local sense applying only to Palestine itself, is a matter of controversy. Such importance could be estimated only in the light of a full knowledge of the latest developments in military techniques. It is almost universally assumed that the effective claimant to the Negev as a strategic area is Britain or, more correctly, the Anglo-American or Western bloc. The allocation of this region to the Arabs—who cannot develop it anyhow—under the suggestion that the "Arab part of Palestine" be united with Transjordan, has been interpreted as a way of giving Britain the military bases she needs to protect the Middle East from a possible Russian invasion. Britain would thus return to Palestine through the backdoor of King Abdullah's realm. But even most Arabs are opposed to this plan, because they consider Abdullah a British pawn. In Paris, some Arabs went so far as to hint that the Zionists—now regarded as violently and irredeemably anti-British—should discourage the aggrandizement of Transjordan in order to weaken Britain's position in the Near East. In spite of Mr. Bevin's speeches about eternal British-Arab friendship, the Arabs—with the sole exception of Abdullah—want to be rid of British imperialism. In their objections to Abdullah the Arabs are at one with the Soviet bloc.

A careful analysis of the conflicting interests in the Negev could perhaps show that these are not as irreconcilable as is thought. The Arabs do not want and do not need the Negev for actual colonization; they could easily give the Jews those strips of land that can be colonized by such pioneering efforts as only the Jews in the Near East are ca-

pable of. Such concessions would probably apply to the northern part of the Negev. On the other hand, Transjordan might well get the land-bridge across the desert to Gaza, which is now claimed by Egypt as a reward for her contribution to the Arab war effort. The Jews, on their part, have never claimed Gaza for Israel. As for an outlet to the Red Sea, there is no reason why a free port there could not be secured for Israel on the same terms as the free port in Haifa which Israel is being invited to concede to the Arabs. The very fact that Haifa is more important for the Arabs than Aqaba is for Israel may facilitate such an arrangement. Even the question of fishing rights in the Gulf of Aqaba may not pose insurmountable difficulties. But naturally every such solution demands a complete change in the relations between the two peoples.

JERUSALEM is the second controversial point. After November 29, 1947, most Jews would have readily agreed to the city's "internationalization," although nobody had an exact idea of how this should work. In the meantime, however, the objective difficulties of such a scheme became more obvious, as the UN proved unable to save the city from savage fighting, indiscriminate shelling, and the interruption of its communications and water supply. And the emotional interest of the Christian world seemed to have more declamatory than practical value. Even those eager for an international administration for Jerusalem would reject an internationalization likely to remain on paper and unable to prevent the struggle for the actual physical domination of the city from being continued to its finish.

The section in the Bernadotte Report on the demilitarization of Jerusalem is the most pathetic of all. All that has been said above about the UN's inability to play its expected role applies even more emphatically to Jerusalem. It is, therefore, easy to understand why Israel—though perhaps still ready to consider an international authority for Jerusalem if such authority is armed with sufficient power and provides trustworthy guar-

antees—demands control of the Jewish areas and a corridor from the city to the coast that would safeguard the city's Jewish population from the dangers of famine and thirst—dangers they were exposed to for two anxious months and overcame thanks only to the self-sacrificial efforts of other Jews.

The test of the UN's will to act will come when the late Mediator's request for an armed force of at least six thousand men to assure the security of Jerusalem comes up for decision. If the UN cannot settle its internal difficulties enough to make internationalization plausible, then it will have to consider some other solution for the Jerusalem impasse. It would have to admit, however reluctantly, that some kind of partition of the city itself would have to be put in effect—if only as a temporary measure until a condominium became possible.

THERE are still many unknown factors affecting the Palestine situation. The most important of these is the internal strife in the Arab League. Abdullah's role offers one of the thorniest problems for Israel. In spite of its small size, Transjordan, with its British-led-and-trained Legion, has emerged from the war in Palestine with the reputation of being the strongest, if not the only, military force in the Arab world; and thus Transjordan has outplayed every other independent state in the Arab League. At the same time, Abdullah is the only Arab ruler likely to gain from the Palestinian settlement now envisaged in the UN, which would join Arab Palestine to Transjordan; and therefore he is more amenable than the other Arab rulers to compromise on the Jewish state, although he cannot openly say so. Many people believe that he would acquiesce to a settlement like the one now contemplated by the Anglo-American accord, which offers recognition to Israel, aggrandizement to Transjordan, and, possibly, the granting to both states of membership in the United Nations provided Russia does not interpose a veto. Even if no explicit agreement were signed between Israel and Transjordan, the result would then be what is called here a

"settlement by toleration," or a *modus vivendi*.

But such a solution would be met with the resolute opposition of the other Arab states—which seem willing to use even the Mufti as a tool—and of the Russian bloc. This places Israel in an awkward dilemma. If the strange bedfellowship of America and Russia that helped the Jewish state into birth is dissolved and replaced by the antagonism marking the relations of the two giant powers in every other field, then the Israeli Provisional Government may be forced to make a choice for itself. Israeli consent to a form of partition that gave substantial advantages to Abdullah, and which would be subject to the reproach of aiding "British imperialism" or Western strategy, would probably cost Israel a great deal of Russian support. It is even doubtful whether in such an event the required two-thirds vote in the UN Assembly could be obtained. However, it still remains true that the only solution in sight is one that rests on an Israeli-Transjordanian arrangement.

Nevertheless, Israel is determined to preserve a policy of strict "neutrality" as between West and East. It is a position many another country would like to maintain, but it is

easier to proclaim it than to carry it out. Israel needs the support of both Russia and the Anglo-Americans; and while it is perfectly possible to accept support from two different sides, it is infinitely difficult to pay the price each of them may demand. It will not be possible to play the one card as trump against the other indefinitely.

The uneasy international background is the main obstacle to a Palestinian settlement, as it is the obstacle to the solution of most of the burning political problems of our time. A renewal of the fighting, which Bernadotte predicted would take place if the Assembly failed to act, and which has in fact already broken out, though still only on a small scale, might bring military success to the Jews; but even then no settlement would emerge that could last without international intervention. It may in the course of time become clear that such intervention need not be by the UN—if the UN is not capable of acting adequately. This should be kept in mind. But in any case Bernadotte's appeal to the powers concerned to use their resources for the restoration of peace in Palestine should not remain unanswered. Otherwise there will be no peace.

A PHILOSOPHY FOR "MINORITY" LIVING

The Jewish Situation and the "Nerve of Failure"

DAVID RIESMAN

THE "nerve of failure" is the courage to face aloneness and the possibility of defeat in one's personal life or one's work without being morally destroyed. It is, in a larger sense, simply the nerve to be oneself when that self is not approved of by the dominant ethic of a society.

In America, "success" is central; we are provided with a catalogue of what is success and what is failure, and nothing matters except achieving the first and avoiding the second. Whoever accepts the prevailing social standards of our times is not alone, not morally isolated; even if he is a "failure" he remains related, if only in fantasy, to the dominant theme. Such a person has no more need of the "nerve of failure" than a gambler who has had a bad day at roulette: for him life is centered on the wheel, and he remains related, though anxious and mis-

erable, so long as he can go on watching the others who are still in the game. The "nerve of failure" is needed only for really heretical conduct: when one renounces even the company of misery and takes the greater risk of isolation—that is, the risk of never rejoining the company.

The "nerve of failure" is akin to the traditional virtue of "courage in defeat," praised in a number of ethical systems. But it differs in this sense: it comes into play before defeat is actual, when it is only a possibility. To be sure, one may have a good deal of the "nerve to fail" and still be cowardly in extreme situations. But, on the other hand, while many can find courage in defeat only when others are defeated too, those endowed with the "nerve of failure" have the capacity to go it alone.

THE fact of being a "minority" group often entails certain inconveniences and burdens. This the Jews have always known well and at first-hand. But out of the nettle adversity the Jews once plucked the jewel of an ethic that gave their lives stature and meaning and made a positive contribution to the assertion of human dignity. Has this traditional inner morale crumbled under the impact of recent catastrophe and the social forces of our day? How can we restore for ourselves and our own day the poise and the stamina to confront disability and defeat without failure of nerve? DAVID RIESMAN here discusses how the Jew—or the member of any minority (even a "minority of one")—may hope to regain the "nerve of failure." Dr. Riesman was born in Philadelphia in 1909 and was graduated from Harvard Law School in 1934. He was for a time professor of law at the University of Buffalo, and is at present associate professor of social science in the College of the University of Chicago. He has contributed articles to the law reviews of Yale, Harvard, Columbia, and Chicago as well as to other academic and professional journals.

A man may maintain a lonely course by other means. He may not realize that he is heretical—Rousseau, the "primitive" painter, seems to have thought he was painting just like everybody else. He may be more or less crazy, constructing an elaborate system to justify himself—as did Fourier and Comte. He may attach himself to nature and to imagined transcendental forces—as did William Blake. He may overestimate his personal influence and the extent to which others are listening to what seems to him self-evident and reasonable—as did Robert Owen, the English manufacturer and utopian socialist, whose later life was on the surface one long series of failures. He may convince himself that history, or science, is inevitably on his side—as did Karl Marx. He may protect himself from aloneness by remaining conventional in many spheres—as Darwin did. He may surround himself with a small body of ardent disciples and limit his contact with contemporaries—this

also was Comte's way. Only very rarely will an individual with enough originality to disturb society be able, without such adventitious aids, to face his situation realistically and yet be unshaken by what the majority considers "failure."

These moral attitudes in the face of frustration and defeat become even more complicated, enormously more so, in the life of groups lacking material power, whether domestic "minorities" or small nations. Negroes, Jews, intellectuals, and women as domestic "minorities"; Poles, Irishmen, Italians as small nations coping with big powers—all feel the need of protecting themselves in one way or another from the moral impact of power. In different historical periods they develop different means and modes of coping with this problem. If I discuss the fate and problems of the Jews here, it is because despite all differences, they still provide the most suggestive paradigm of the relatively powerless group.

FOR the last two thousand years the Jews have been a minority; before that, it may be suggested, they were a "small power," a buffer state.* But until recent times, many Jews did not have what we might today regard as a typical minority outlook. Their ethical regime was quite defiantly Ptolemaic, revolving about the small group of Jews, not the larger Gentile group—and, accordingly, they learned to remain unimpressed by Gentile temporal power. Being unimpressed did not mean being unafraid—material power might beat or starve one to death; it did mean refusing to surrender moral hegemony to the majority merely because it had the reality of power. Instead the Jews "saw through" power by observing its blindness in comparison with the vision possible to the weak. A saying of Nahman of Bratzlav exemplifies this outlook: "Victory cannot tolerate truth, and if that which

is true is spread before your very eyes, you will reject it, because you are a victor. Whoever would have truth itself, must drive hence the spirit of victory; only then may he prepare to behold the truth."

In other words, since the Jews' ethical scheme placed no great premium on material power, on material success, the majority was not looked up to with envy and admiration; hence its verdicts, both as to the ends of life and as to the value of the minority itself, did not echo in the Jews' self-consciousness.

A related attitude was expressed in the belief—which kept the Jews Jews and not Christians—that the Messiah was still to come. To be sure, many Jews during the dark periods between the 11th and 17th centuries were deceived at times into believing that the Messiah had indeed come. But these aberrations were limited in scope and time: Jews in general continued to have faith in the continuance of revelation into the future and to be unimpressed by contemporary events and the would-be Messiahs who, consciously or unconsciously, exploited these events. If we do not take this belief, that the Messiah will come, too literally, we can see that one of its meanings is an attack on the powers that be, and an emphatic statement that justice and peace shall some day—as they do not today—prevail everywhere among men.*

Jewish ethics, though not devoid of authoritarian strains, is, like Greek ethics, based primarily on reason, although reason has sometimes descended to casuistry. It is an ethics of reason both in its ends, which are human and earthly, and in its means, which are argumentative rather than dogmatic. Even the casuistry seems often to have been turned to the humanizing of authoritative texts, as a lawyer might "interpret" a statute or decision in order to reach a more humane and reasonable result.

* I am indebted to Dr. Erich Fromm for calling my attention to the relations between Jewish power and ethics in their historical changes. One recognizes, of course, how difficult it is to generalize about Jewish ethics, as about anything else concerning "Jews"—or indeed any group.

* There are many Messianic, or as we should say, utopian elements in Christianity, of course; but the established institutionalized churches have always tended to play down these disturbing notions and to treat revelation as a completed or at least a centralized process. Dissenting sects have tended to restore the Messianic faith.

Such an ethical pattern as the one just described would seem admirably fitted to the psychic situation of a powerless minority which—unlike, let us say, the Republican party during recent years—has no chance of soon becoming a majority. But, as we know, ethical systems are not developed in the abstract; though they have a momentum of their own, Jewish ethical patterns arose in connection with given social and economic conditions; and they were embroidered by complex, demanding rituals and racial myths.

Occasionally, the group's "nerve of failure" was supported by the notion that its very powerlessness proved the Jews to be in fact the Chosen of God. In this way, defeat itself could strengthen the faith of the "saving remnant" of Jews. On the other hand, we should recognize that the spiritual forces that gave the Jews their immense moral resistance in the ghetto rested on a material base that, though often precarious, had considerably solidity. The Jews were part of the medieval order, which gave them, like everyone else, a relatively fixed psychic place, even though theirs was that of pariah. (See Daniel Bell, "A Parable of Alienation," *Jewish Frontier*, November 1946.) Within the medieval order, moreover, the Jews developed a near monopoly of certain skills, in artisanship as well as in trade, which were handed down, as in the guilds, from father to son.

Thus, the ghetto walls buttressed the Jewish ethical walls.

THE rise of modern capitalistic society and the levelling of ghetto walls may be said to have started an uneven dialectic of change in the spiritual and material bases of Jewish life. Many Jews in the main Western countries surrendered their inherited ethical system in return for a chance to participate in the wider world, thus losing their special sources of spiritual strength. Sometimes this was done out of opportunism; more often than not this drive was mixed with more idealistic motives. For among the forces that broke down ghetto barriers from the outside was the Enlighten-

ment. Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity were a set of values with great moral appeal—as well as with many parallels in Jewish ethics.

The Enlightenment was impious towards authority, utopian about the future, and hospitable to reason. What then could have been more attractive to many of the most ethically sensitive Jews, especially at a time when the ghetto tradition itself seems to have become somewhat impoverished in Western Europe? Such Jews could move from a religious to a political minority position with hardly any change in ethical attitude.

The great Jewish intellectual and political leaders of this period represented, in highly individual ways, mergers of Jewish and Enlightenment ethics, and the retention of the "nerve of failure." At the same time, certain skills and attitudes nurtured by ghetto life became useful and rewarding assets in the modern world. In the expanding era of international finance and international markets, the developed financial and commercial skills of a Rothschild, as later of a Rosenwald, were important: some Jews, that is, had a head-start. Jewish cultivation of a particular type of intelligence, moreover, could be turned to account in modern managerial, professional, and intellectual capacities; while the Jewish view of an open future (the Messiah still to come) was well adapted to leaders of progressive political or labor movements. In sum, many Jews gained personal power and self-confidence during the free capitalism that lasted until the close of the 19th century.

In those days, Jewish self-contempt did not exist in its characteristic contemporary forms. While rising Jews often shared the attitudes common to parvenus, they had confidence in their ultimate social acceptance, or that of their progeny; consciously or unconsciously, they felt they had something of particular value to offer. Likewise, those Jews who took a direct share in the struggles of the Enlightenment felt no insecurity or self-belittlement as Jews; they could be wholeheartedly indignant at discrimination since they had confidence in the ultimate

triumph of the ideals of the Enlightenment. They, too, felt that they had something to offer—namely, a social program that the majority needed and would learn to want.

During this period, therefore, the consequences of Jewish acceptance of a largely Gentile ethics were positive: both because that ethics was rational and progressive and because the material role and power of Jews were on the increase.

HOWEVER, historical developments soon began to undermine the material position of the Jews and give a different meaning to their new ethical position. As heavy industry grew in importance, it gradually freed itself from the free market. Jewish family and group "trade secrets" soon became common property. "Fair trade" acts and similar autarchic limitations on the free market came to restrict Jewish merchandising talents (while permitting, however, the marginal survival of many small Jewish shopkeepers). Though Jews shared in the growing managerial and professional openings of the "new" middle class, they began to be faced with increasing competition.

This lessening of the Jew's sense of economic value, and of his self-confidence in the possession of a special skill, helped lessen his feeling of ethical security, and made him increasingly a psychological victim of the dominant social and economic systems of the modern world.

But this is also a fate that, both in its economic and its psychological aspects, has overtaken vast numbers of the less "successful" classes in our new society, and condemned them to "alienation." For them, as for Jews, the relative security of a social role fixed by skill, family, age, and sex has vanished. One must now "show one's stuff" in a competitive market, and one's stuff is one's "personality," an externalized part of the self, and not primarily one's matter-of-fact skill. (See Erich Fromm, *Man for Himself* pp. 67-82.) In other words, it is not the genuine self that is put on the market in the race for success, or even economic survival, but the "cosmetic" self, which is as free of

any aroma of personal, non-marketable idiosyncrasy as it is free of "B.O." or last year's waistline. If this artificial self succeeds, then doubts may be temporarily quieted. However, since self-evaluation has been surrendered to the market, failure in the market, or even fear of failure, is translated into self-contempt. (The "market" in this sense includes all spheres of life—business, politics, art, love, friendship.)

For the dominant groups—those that, by birth or temperament or luck, have been able to make the grade—the subjection of all values to the test of the market is convenient. It justifies their own existence in what amounts to moral rather than merely power-political terms. In a market economy pervaded by what Karl Polanyi has termed the "market mentality" (COMMENTARY, February 1947), control of the economy will carry with it, to an unusual degree, control of the ethical regime. And the market, we must remember, has had perhaps a more complete sway in America than elsewhere.

Now, add to this the fact that America happens to have colonials—Negroes and other ethnic minorities—within its borders, and that we have developed a racialism not to be found in Europe. Upon the Jewish minority, this situation operates with special force, as can be seen in the encounter between Jewish traditions and the melting pot.

The melting pot had, especially in its early days, valuable elements: a kind of Whitmanesque equalitarian vigor and a seeming hospitality to cultural diversity—but it increasingly became a form of internal imperialism in the interest of the earlier arrivals. Its aim was narrowed to producing "Americans all" of a starched uniformity, freed of all cultural coloring, "maladjustment," or deviation. The main burden was on the minorities, while few demands were made by the ethical system of the Protestant majority. (Protestantism and modern capitalism, having grown up together, have always been congenial.)

EVEN today, the typical Protestant businessman still makes money as a by-

product of his devotion to his work and his organization; the money, as Max Weber pointed out, serves as a proof of fulfilment of ethical duty, of having found one's "calling," one's proper—and therefore prosperous—social niche. But there is no such compatibility between non-Protestant ethics and modern capitalism; hence the moral disorientation worked by the latter among Mexicans and South Americans generally, Eastern and Southern Europeans, and Treaty-Port Chinese. The same moral disorientation was produced among these people when they emigrated to America, affecting not only Jews from pre-capitalist Eastern Europe, but also Italians, Greeks, Mexicans. For these non-Protestants, business was not originally the expression of their religion, but a by-product of the need for money, status, or family security. For the dominant groups, the Protestant—or, more accurately, the Puritan—strain in our culture permitted a development of a kind of ethics intertwined with business. "Mere" money-making, for example, was open to criticism when not accompanied by an ethos of business as "calling" or as "service." The non-Protestant, on the other hand, was often led, both by the special pressures of modern capitalism upon him and the strangeness of the Protestant market ethic to his own, to discard his own values without assimilating prevailing values. As a result he often became a caricature of the American careerist.

IN THIS process, certain elements in Jewish ethics—the attitude towards power, towards the future, and towards reason—often tend to become distorted. The irreverent attitude towards power becomes contempt for what remains of the Puritan ethics of business and professional enterprise, which is interpreted as softness or hypocrisy. Irreverence towards authority degenerates into an indiscriminate disrespect for convention, whether that convention is an exploitative device or a crystallization of decent standards of personal intercourse. This Jewish irreverence may also appear as a cynicism that seeks money and power without the con-

viction that they represent the fruits of virtue, or even without any real belief in them as ends.

Similarly, the Jewish attitude towards the future, with its Messianic devaluation of present reality, can be fitted, by distortion, all too nicely into the American success tradition, where—as the Lynds have remarked—people live "at" the future, eternally "on the make," either awaiting a lucky break for themselves, or planning for one for their offspring.

Finally, the Jewish attitude towards reason can also suffer a change. "Pure" reason for its own sake, what we might call Talmudic intelligence, is at a discount in America: it is not "practical." On the other hand, manipulative intelligence is exceedingly useful; in fact, the entire Jewish constellation of intelligence, humor, and charm is often humiliatingly exploited—for instance, by so many Jewish comedians—as entertainment and self-ingratiation.

Jews in America, like other Americans, go in for hero-worship; and it is possible to trace, in the types they frequently select for admiration, patterns of compromise between the American Protestant tradition and their own. Though they can afford to admire the "impractical" Einstein because he has been such a world-famous success, they tend more to bestow their medals on intelligent operators like Brandeis and Baruch. Though these men have the ear of presidents, they are not mere "court Jews": they are quite outspoken; moreover, they are old and white-haired, appropriate to the Jewish reverence for aged wisdom—yet they are also energetic and eupeptic, in keeping with the American worship of dynamic youth.

It goes without saying that—like Jewish ethics—American Protestant ethics contains many divergent themes, and that the Enlightenment still lives in its best representatives. However, the Jew emerging from the European ghetto was not met at Ellis Island by the representatives of enlightenment. At most, he was given a choice between accepting the melting pot and the ethics of success—as interpreted by earlier immigrants

often bent on exploiting him economically or psychically—or trying to retain his traditions as a transient in a voluntary ghetto. If he took the latter course, he was seldom stimulated towards any effort to reinterpret the meaning of his ethical background in terms of the American context; rather he tended to freeze defensively in his memories and rituals. If he took the former—perhaps more typical—course, he altered his ethical and intellectual inheritance so that it could be turned to account in the struggle for success, just as a neurotic makes use of his illness, or a cripple his misery, for fragmentary advantages.

HOWEVER, the same recent social and economic changes that have weakened the material position of Jews have also tended to alter the meaning of success as such. The mere matter-of-fact achievement of high economic or even political position no longer satisfies. Since we market our personalities, it is imperative that we be “popular,” accepted; and handicapped ethnic minorities are not popular. The Jew who plays the power and success game can hardly help viewing himself through the eyes of the more successful players.

Bernard Marx, a character in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, despises himself because he is short. The majority, stunted lower-caste people, are also short, but he compares himself with the tall top-caste to which in other respects he “belongs,” and to which, though with some ambivalence, he surrenders his ethical judgment. That is, he accepts from them the same cultural emphasis on height that sells Adler Elevator Shoes (the sexual reward being, as so often, a symbol for the reward of status). Since his society puts a high value on science, Bernard Marx's shortness is explained in seemingly rational terms by the rumor that some alcohol accidentally got into his feeding solution when he was a bottled embryo (alcohol being intentionally used only to stunt the lower castes). In any rational ethics, of course, there would be no correlation between height and human value. Yet

Bernard does not quite dare look behind the “scientific” social judgment, and so must turn the blame upon himself. Among Jews, this relation between physical appearance and ethical valuation is seldom quite so obvious (there is more of this among Negroes, who tend to rate each other according to lightness of skin and other white characteristics); nevertheless, the Jewish devaluation of Jewish physiognomy is not confined to Hollywood, as the flourishing state of plastic surgery in Manhattan would testify.

If a minority accepts the majority's definition of good looks, we would expect that the majority's definition of good conduct would be likewise accepted. And so it turns out. But is the Jew who sharply criticizes the behavior of his fellow-Jews accepting the majority's standards, or is he not simply exercising his human privilege—from which it would be anti-Semitic to exclude him—of disliking certain kinds of behavior? We cannot tell at first glance, though we may wonder why, amid all the evil in the world and all the examples of vicious and mean conduct, he fastens on the Jews. Moreover, even when the traits he selects for attention are not so obviously differentiated according to race—where, for instance, a Jew claims to despise Italian and Greek as well as Jewish manners—we may ask the same sort of question: why is he preoccupied with differences in manners and not, let us say, with differences in coldness and warmth, gloominess and wit? Has he not accepted the majority's judgments as to what is important and the majority's criteria of good and evil?*

However, the Jew whose focus of criticism is the poor behavior of his fellow-Jews may urge that, far from accepting the majority's standards, he feels merely threatened by them: he is worried by the menace of

* I don't mean to enter here upon complicated questions of national character and to examine whether Jewish manners are characteristically undignified, or British behavior is really lacking in warmth; I am raising the problem rather of the way in which majority ethics gives rise to a process of stereotyping and selection in which certain traits are valued, others devalued, still others ignored.

anti-Semitism if Jews do not conform, and is being "realistic." Here we may ask why, among the many "causes" of anti-Semitism, he selects primarily those over which Jews themselves seem to have some control. Perhaps better manners on the subway would mitigate anti-Jewish feeling; perhaps if Jews did not appear in public at all—no Frankfurter on the Supreme Court, no Dubinsky in the labor movement—they would not be noticed. But in advocating such things, has this timorous Jew done anything more than accept the majority's anti-Semitic stereotype, as well as their rationalizations for refusing to accept Jews as individuals on their own merits? Is this Jew really concerned about the daily quality of direct personal contacts between Jews and non-Jews, which might, in the long run, have some marginal effect on anti-Semitism? Perhaps.

But ordinarily I think it can be shown that the threat such a Jew feels is that of being himself caught, in his own deeper consciousness, in the majority stereotype of "the Jew." This involves not only contempt for "the other Jews," but his own self-belittlement. The real cause of his concern with the behavior of his fellow Jews is the moral retreat he has made in servilely accepting the majority's ethics, not the so-called undesirable Jewish traits that provoked his anxiety. And if he wanted to do something about anti-Semitism, he might begin with his own moral subservience, where he has at least a real chance to change things, instead of trying to reform the manners or career choices of his fellow-Jews.

IF WE confined our attention to such instances of the acceptance of majority judgments as these (and of course we are selecting a particular segment of majority opinion and not the entire spectrum), we might underestimate the extent of present-day Jewish ethical bondage. However, since many Jews, especially in recent years, have tried to repress their tendencies towards group-belittlement of themselves, we must now look more sharply for evidence of this self-belittlement—where not covertly released

in gibe or gesture—in reactions that are seldom fully conscious.

Apologetics as a reaction formation hardly needs discussion in these pages. It surrenders the ethical initiative, for it permits the anti-Semite to frame the issue of debate and the norms of criticism. Denials that Jews are rich, radical, or rude concede to the anti-Semites that it is a crime to be rich, radical, or rude.

Another reaction is a kind of self-denial, in which Jews deny that there are such things as Jews. Sometimes this self-denial is a "liberal" reaction, an insistence that there are no anthropological ("racial") differences, out of fear that such differences would be exploited. Sometimes this self-denial is rationalized as a "radical" reaction, by the insistence that there is no "Jewish question" whatsoever, but only some other question, such as the question of capitalism. Jews who take this latter course do at least identify themselves with a submerged group larger than their own, but they run the risk of carrying the position to extremes in believing that the Jewish problem, despite cultural and historical differences, is in all respects similar to—let us say—the Negro problem, or the problem of the working class as a whole. In this way, the specifically Jewish overtones are lost; but indeed this is precisely what the self-denier wants.

Still a third reaction occurs as a revulsion against all traits associated with the majority stereotype of "the Jew." Are Jews pushing? Very well, we will be retiring. Are Jews over-critical? Very well, we will swallow our protest.* The minority group actually expects more from itself than from the rest of the population; that is, it applies the majority ethics but with a double standard.

It is evident that this timid double standard is very different from the feeling of

* Some Jews indulge in what looks on the surface like just the opposite reaction. They aggressively play up what they accept as Jewish traits; sometimes they select the very ones that are detested in the majority stereotype; sometimes they indiscriminately fasten their affection on those traits, good or bad. Are Jews pushing? Very well, pushing is nice, and we will push. Are

noblesse oblige of certain ruling classes. These classes have no doubts of their right to rule, even when they are far from perfect; in contrast, the "double-standard" Jews seem to say that Jewish claims for full equality are invalid if Jews are merely human.

In all these instances Jews try to cope with American anti-Semitism in terms of majority stereotypes, which by their very irrationality prevent both minority and majority from making any fresh approaches to reality.

RECENT events have brought still another aspect of Jewish self-doubt to light. I think that exaggeration of the uniqueness of the crime committed by the Nazis against the Jews may sometimes be read as betraying an unconscious doubt as to the ethical justification of the Jewish case. When some Jews claim that no injustice was ever so great, nor any dictator the peer of Hitler, they are not always simply venting an understandable grief. They are afraid that the very enormity, the irretrievable quality, of the killing of the Jews must prove something about them, something in fact against them. For there is no way that a success ethics can cope with unavenged material defeat. Some may try to still the doubt—whether, after all, Hitler was not right—by "racial" vindictiveness against the German people. What seems to be lingering in the minds of so many is the notion that Hitler somehow won a "victory" over the Jews.

On the other hand, a Jew who has found his way to an independent ethics would say with Rabbi Johanan: "All distress that Israel and the world bear in common is distress; the distress confined to Israel alone is not distress" (*In Time and Eternity*). On the ethical side, he would find little to choose

Jews critical? Very well, let us exploit this fine cultural resource. Some young Negroes, too, play this pathetic game, accepting the whites' judgments in the very act of making an issue with them. Likewise, many middle-class intellectuals spend their lives reacting against middle-class standards and values, for instance in bohemianism, as if this were the only ethical contrast to what they conceive as the middle class.

between the Nazi murder of Jews and of Poles, or between the concentration camps of Hitler and Stalin; on the political side, he would be free to perceive that the slaughter of the European Jews was to some extent a historical accident in which they happened to become material game and spiritual symbol for a congeries of reactionary forces.

Victory and defeat, success and failure, are facts. But they are facts in the world of power, subject to an evaluative judgment in which defeat may become victory and victory defeat. Who "really" won in the war between Athens and Sparta? It is conventional today to decide in favor of Athens. What, for example, about Weimar Germany? Are many of its critics, who attack its experimentalism, its pacifism, its artistic and intellectual "irresponsibility" and lack of "consensus" only disapproving of these tendencies because they did not ward off political defeat? Many generations hence, may not people look back with admiration on the cultural and even some of the political and social achievements of that brief period between 1919 and 1933, and pay little attention to all our elaborate explanations for its "failure," explanations which, as in the case of the slaughtered Jews, consciously or unconsciously subordinate ourselves to an ethics of success pure and simple, and overemphasize what was wrong with the victim?

Even such devastating defeats as those of the last decade the truly moral man must find the courage and the capacity to face with the nerve of failure.

OF COURSE, it would be applying a double standard to expect Jews to have the nerve of failure when other groups do not. Moreover, it would be as unfair to blame Jews for losing their traditional ethics in the melting pot, as to blame them for not emerging from it as Anglo-Saxon gentlemen. But the opposite error, which tolerantly "understands" all minority behavior as the inevitable consequence of persecution, is not helpful either. The real question is, what

choices do the Jews now have to clothe their ethical nakedness?

There is no want of proposed solutions, many of which seem to me to repeat or exacerbate the circular problems in which a minority is so often caught. One is a plea for a return to the ritual and religious elements historically linked to the ethical resources of Jewish life. It is not surprising that this same plea for what amounts to a medieval revival is also being made at this time by many non-Jews as a general therapy for modern "alienation."

The usual criticism of such efforts to restore psychic security and dignity is that they are impractical, since the change from medieval to modern times cannot be reversed. But another criticism can be made from the standpoint of the very Jewish ethics which one wants to recapture. That ethics contains a fervent claim for a more decent future, a claim that takes the form of Messianic hope. Though the glories of biblical Palestine are looked back upon with pride and sorrow, utopia lies in the future, not in the nostalgic past. To seek restoration of an earlier time is to confess intellectual and ethical impoverishment. The "nerve of failure" implies the ability to face the possibility of failure, but it is not rooted in the assumption that past and present failures mark the limits of human powers. To be satisfied with something no better than that which medieval Jewry had—assuming, in defiance of all reason, that this could be attained—is a surrender of that typically Jewish demand for a more decent future for Jews and non-Jews alike.

THE surrender of utopian claims is one of the most revealing symptoms of the current state of minority ethics. Despite differences in shading, such claims are a part of Judaic, Christian, and Enlightenment ethical systems. But they are very much at a discount in 20th-century America. The powerful do not need visions; they either fear or scorn them. Their response to such claims is: "If you don't like it here, why don't you go back where you came from?"

Some minority representatives aggressively propose to do just that, to go back—in time. Whereas the older success game permitted many minorities to be easily satisfied with petty gains in the American scene, the newer religious revival would satisfy them with petty dreams from the past.

Political Zionism is another suggestion proposed as a means of obtaining psychic as well as physical security for Jews. Jewish nationalists seem to be even more impressed by worldly power than Jews who urge a religious revival; they have given up the success game on the domestic scene only to transfer it to the international sphere; this entails a complete acceptance of majority attitudes towards force and *raison d'état*. Thus they abandon those attitudes of subjection of power and loyalty to reason which, in our analysis, appeared among the significant contributions of Jewish ethics to the general problem of the powerless minority and the small nation.

If Jews are to avoid self-defeating courses of action, it would seem necessary to clarify the themes in their ethical tradition that fit the problem of the powerless, and then to separate these from their cultist and ritualistic trappings. The way food is prepared or the style of beards are locally various and ethically quite indifferent matters—questions of taste and not of value. To attach one's love and admiration to them is to risk putting the superficial or parochial aspects of Jewish culture in the center of affection, rather than its ethically significant elements. And it is this sort of love that so easily runs over into fondness for, or defensiveness about, even the weaker sides of Jewish life in America. This sort of chauvinism is particularly easy to rationalize today, just because the Jews seem at the moment a defeated people on the world's stage. It would be well, however, to recall Nietzsche's advice not to love a defeated nation. (Nietzsche seems to have meant that an honorable person finds it harder in defeat than in victory to detach himself from his nation—witness German nationalism after the First World War.)

The concept of minority ethics suggested here is not meant as an invitation to minority fanaticism or as a condemnation of all majority ethics as such; the minority position in itself is no guarantee of ethical superiority. Rather, it points out that the Jewish minority in America must discover what are the ethically significant themes relevant to its present situation, which in turn requires reinterpretation of Jewish tradition.

Such a reinterpretation of tradition would in itself do something to overcome Jewish self-belittlement by giving the past meaning without mystery. But the more direct function of this reinterpretation would be to foster a Jewish self-image independent of the majority ethics. Adherence to majority ethics may be a help in social climbing, or in rationalizing one's acceptance of the values of the culture that happens to be dominant. But the experience of many Jews in America must be that this adherence is emotionally precarious, and that it easily becomes self-destructive once things do not go well for oneself or one's group. There are more ways of acquiring a feeling of "belonging" in the American scene than the alternatives of melting pot or parochial separation.

YET is it not merely wishful to ask that Jews today, of all people, be reasonable men looking for guidance in their personal and political lives to a rational, and therefore experimental and tentative, ethics? No matter how ethically inadequate the ritualist, racist, and nationalist therapies may be, does not their very existence prove that the vast bulk of Jews cannot be expected to defend themselves morally against power without the encompassing support of daily ritual observances, or without the *ersatz* program of Palestinian terrorism? Is not one of my own arguments—that Jewish ethics has been closely related to Jewish material circumstance—proof of the impracticality of any therapy that begins with ethics and not with environment? I would answer that movements of thought among a people are never entirely determined by the material setting. On the contrary, an ethical and

intellectual feature—such, for instance, as an eloquent tradition of utopian thought—may itself become one of the institutional forces of the environment. In the case of the Diaspora history of the Jews, utopian thought was even a decisive force. Of course, such a program does not pretend to "save" the Jews; its goal is moral independence from the majority, not physical survival or a solution of "the Jewish problem." Its gains would largely be in the happier lives of Jews and other powerless folk. Nevertheless, a reduction of Jewish self-contempt and an increase in the Jewish "nerve of failure" is bound to make for more realistic, as well as attractive, behavior by individual Jews and Jewish agencies, and so reduce those minor, pointless tensions and self-defeating patterns that Jews themselves may create.

Specific groups of Jews in America are meeting widely different problems and experiences. There is room for research into the intricate relations between their ethics and their attitudes toward themselves, research that would test and refine such hypotheses as those suggested here. Such work has meaning for minority groups in general. At the same time American Jews have much to learn from other minority experiences and traditions—from Negroes in America and South Africa; from anti-fascists in Mussolini's Italy, Hitler's Germany, Franco's Spain, Peron's Argentina; from intellectual and cultural dissenters from modern capitalism and Stalinist Communism; and so on. Moreover, the utopian traditions of Christian sects, of the Enlightenment, of America itself—these have contributions to make to the development of a minority ethics. In fact, is not such development enjoined on almost all of us by our human situation? For who does not face at some time—at least as a child—a conflict between his own values and those of a stronger and oppressive power? Until a time when power is no longer used oppressively, minorities will have a compelling need of the nerve of failure to defend an independent view of the self and of what life holds.

RACISM COMES TO POWER IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Threat of White Nationalism

T. C. ROBERTSON

Slowly but surely a racial self-consciousness, a collective resentment, is being forced upon the Negro, not only in South Africa but throughout the world, and South Africa seems the inevitable theatre for its release. (H. G. Wells, The Outlook for Homo Sapiens.)

NATIONALISM in South Africa could quite logically be associated with any one of the Bantu tribes which, before its organization was shattered by impact with the white pioneers, had almost evolved to nationhood—the Zulu or the Basutu, for instance. But no such meaning attaches to the “nationalism” which in May scored an unexpected election triumph and made possible the formation of a new government in the country. On the contrary, in

THE recent victory of the Nationalist party in South Africa came as a shock to a world which had almost persuaded itself that the defeat of Nazism meant the end of racist nationalism as a political force in our times. T. C. ROBERTSON here analyzes the present “white nationalism” of South Africa—with its denial of any hope of a common citizenship to the black man and its anti-Semitic overtones—in terms of the long history of troubled race relations and economic exploitation in that country. Mr. Robertson was born in the Transvaal in 1907 of an Afrikaner family. Both his father and his grandfather were Nationalist members of Parliament for Witbank; Mr. Robertson himself was an unsuccessful candidate for this parliamentary seat in the last general election, standing as a member of the United party of General Smuts. Mr. Robertson has been political correspondent for South Africa's two largest English-language newspapers, the *Sunday Times* and the *Rand Daily Mail*; during the past war, he was at the head of the government organization set up to counter internal pro-Nazi propaganda.

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the vocabulary of that party a “nationalist” denotes a citizen of European descent whose language is Afrikaans and who believes the doctrine that this little nation of less than a million and a half people has “the God-ordained mission to maintain its identity, superiority, and rule” in Southern Africa. Moreover, there are laws to prevent the Zulu or Basutu from preaching the same thing about his nation, no matter how ardently he might believe in the doctrine.

It is in the contradictions of this situation that we find the very essence of the country's future problems.

This jealous and exclusive “nationalism for the few” might at first appear to be a form of collective megalomania. But there is some historical justification for the self-confidence. These Afrikaners are “the Boers” who in 1836—about the time that Texas declared its independent nationhood—began their northward migration in search of a country and freedom from British rule. Their history is a saga of adventure, hardship, courage, and faith which earned the admiration of the world. In battle they destroyed two savage black despotisms. In politics they created a republican form of government. And in the process the embryonic nation acquired a name, the Afrikaners, and a language, Afrikaans.

WITH “savage Africa” defeated, survival appeared to depend on successful resistance to militant and grasping British imperialism. The marksmen of their commandos, peasants and hunters of incredible skill, defeated the small British forces assembled in 1881—only to lose the devastating Three Years' War at the turn of the century. The military phase of the struggle ended in a mood of despair, but the determined politi-

cal leadership of two Boer War generals, Botha and Smuts, demonstrated that there were other weapons. By bargaining they achieved first of all representative government and then self-government for the Union of South Africa. They preached the One Stream Policy—a policy of conciliation which maintained that the British and Afrikaner elements should co-operate in building the future.

The European racial stocks in South Africa are probably less diverse than those in the United States of America. But in this country the “melting pot process,” which produces the hundred per cent American, has never been very successful. Its failure to operate is principally due to bilingualism, to the latent antithesis between Afrikaans and English. But to a lesser extent the failure is constitutional and due to the conflict between monarchism and republicanism.

These factors dominated political thought during the first two decades of the 20th century. In 1906 there had been a cultural renaissance, the Second Language Movement, and Afrikaners began producing poetry, drama, and fiction as their language achieved a certain philological stability. The heroism and suffering of the war, and the freedom-myth, were the inspiration and theme.

The movement also took political form and the Nationalist party was born in 1912 when another Boer War general, Hertzog, who had at first cooperated with Botha and Smuts, left them to champion Afrikaans and republicanism. But continued development was not yet a mere question of intellectual conflict. There were still several chapters of violence in the saga of the Afrikaner “nation.” World War I produced an upheaval and created an emotional background which enabled Smuts to drive home his policy of cooperation with Britain. Indeed, Smuts has always been most successful when international events overshadowed the domestic scene. At the outbreak of war the extremist Afrikaners went into revolt, but achieved only a few more martyrs with whom to embellish the myth. Their victories were

still on the cultural front and in 1914 a start was made with teaching Afrikaans in the schools, although the Bible had not yet been translated and Dutch was still the language of the pulpit. Under Hertzog their politicians made skilful use of the Allied propaganda that the war was being fought to safeguard the rights of small nations. A deputation of Nationalist leaders, after visiting New York, went to Versailles in 1919 to appeal to President Wilson to give their small nation, the Afrikaners, its sovereign independence.

While this relentless republican agitation—the first phase in the development of the Nationalist party—was going on, there were other Afrikaners, fighting side by side with the British, who played a gallant part in driving the German colonial forces from Africa and then went on to fight in Flanders. They were contributing to the Commonwealth ideal. Smuts himself had coined the phrase “British Commonwealth of Nations,” but it was Hertzog who later gave it legal form.

THIS historical background inevitably produced the great illusion of South African politics: that its problem was merely one of discovering a *modus vivendi* for Britisher and Afrikaner and settling the constitutional relationships within the Commonwealth. The real problem of Southern Africa had not yet emerged with any degree of clarity. It is, in effect, a problem in human ecology on a vast scale—the adaptation of the European to a sub-tropical and tropical environment and his relationship with the black races which had already achieved a high degree of physiological adaptation in that environment. The subjugation of the blacks, due to the superiority of gunpowder over assegai and shield, had been easy to accomplish. While Caliban was not actually kept in chains, he was doomed to perpetual serfdom in the political philosophy of the Afrikaners, who bitterly resented the British policy which, under missionary influence, had started to give equal rights to the blacks (Bantu) and coloreds (Malayans, Hotten-

tots, and the children of mixed marriages) in the Cape Province. But British capitalist imperialism in the northern provinces had no such missionary zeal. Before the Anglo-Boer War it already needed one hundred and ten thousand black workers for the gold mines; and that figure was soon to be doubled. Cecil Rhodes had attempted to formulate a policy in his Glen Grey Act. It envisaged a black peasantry migrating seasonally to work on the mines. But insufficient land was provided. It also failed because conditions in the peasant reserves could never be made more attractive than those of labor in the mines; otherwise, obviously, there would be no migration.

The South African Labor party, in closer contact with industrial conditions, first sensed the growing skill and possible encroachment of the black man on what had hitherto been regarded as the exclusive sphere of the European. Originally this party had been modeled on traditional British democratic socialism. But under South African conditions this policy changed into that queer contradiction in terms, "white socialism." It envisaged complete territorial and occupational segregation even to the extent of operating the gold mines with white labor. The Nationalists in 1924 formed an alliance with this Labor party on the agreed platform that "big finance," the capitalist interests of the gold mines, was the main enemy of South Africa. The Nationalists dropped their republican agitation and, assisted by the difficulties of postwar economic and industrial dislocation, succeeded in defeating Smuts.

This Nationalist-Labor government had a comparatively good record and Hertzog, the high priest of republicanism, eventually came to accept the Statute of Westminster as being synonymous with "sovereign independence." But the realities of the native problem were beginning to demand attention, with the result that the segregation policy was formulated. The approach was negative, based on the exploitation of racial antagonism rather than on a program of constructive development for the non-

Europeans in their own areas. Indeed, the 1929 election is still known as the "Black Menace Campaign" and Smuts and his followers were decisively defeated. It required another international crisis to bring them back to power. On this occasion it was not war but the world economic slump which provided the opportunity. When Great Britain left the gold standard, the Nationalist government, as a gesture of "sovereign economic independence," refused to follow suit; the consequences were disastrous for South Africa. Hertzog was forced to cooperate with Smuts.

It was at this stage that Malan, the present Prime Minister, formed his own party. He called it the "Purified Nationalist" party. Republicanism and Afrikaner nationalism were revived with more than the original emotional intensity. But there was a new force at large in the world and these Afrikaners soon began to take lessons from Adolf Hitler's National Socialism. Indeed, the followers of Malan were soon dubbed the Malanazis. In 1936 the celebration of the centenary of the Great Trek gave them an ideal propaganda opportunity and the festivities acquired all the flags, symbolism, and parades of a party day in Nuremberg.

There has been much speculation as to the prewar relations of Malan's party with Nazi Germany. Gauleiter Ernst Bohle, head of the Organization for Germans Abroad, was South African born, and this fact, combined with the strategic importance of the Cape sea route, inevitably resulted in the country receiving a great deal of attention. Goebbels, too, sent an emissary—ostensibly a distinguished academic gentleman on a goodwill tour. A copy of his report, the "Durkheim Report," subsequently fell into the hands of the Smuts government. Professor Durkheim's conclusions about South Africa are obvious. "Afrikaner nationalism," he wrote back to Goebbels, "is the wide portal through which National Socialism will enter the country. This movement, especially in its extremist forms, should be given every encouragement."

It is unlikely that there was ever any formal understanding between Malanism and Nazism. What was happening was merely that the South African Nationalist party was assuming some of the outward form, ideological direction, and program of National Socialism in Germany. Malan himself had socialistic tendencies. In his youth he had written a pamphlet in defence of Marxism. During the war he boasted that no economic reform introduced by Nazism in Germany had not already been incorporated in the platform of his own party.

Anti-Semitism became one of the slogans of the day. It had not previously been a political factor of any consequence. When Hertzog achieved his first victory in 1924 he had liberal Jewish support. President Kruger, in the days of the old Transvaal Republic, was noted for his pro-Jewish sentiments. One of the few visits which the Afrikaner patriarch paid to Johannesburg, the city of gold and greed which he hated, was to lay the foundation stone of the new synagogue. Malan and his party, however, banned Jews from becoming members. Their anti-Semitism was based on the familiar demographic argument, on the contention that there was a "safety point" in the population ratio and if the percentage of Jews exceeded this, racial antagonism and conflict became inevitable. No exact figures were available but it was estimated that Jews constituted about seven per cent of the European population in South Africa. The Nationalist party demanded that all further Jewish immigration should be stopped. The early Jewish pioneers had been financially successful in the distributive trades and it was their ambition to provide their sons with professional careers, with the result that the number of Jews in medicine and law became noticeably large. Accordingly, the Nationalist party demanded a quota system for the professions according to which each racial group would be given licenses in proportion to its numerical strength in the white population.

Anti-Semitic propaganda of the more virulently racial type was also begun and the chief offender in this sphere of party activity

was Eric Louw, a member of the present Cabinet and the man who has been chosen to represent South Africa at the United Nations Assembly. He will present the country's case for the incorporation of the mandated territory of South West Africa into the Union.

WHEN war was declared in September 1939, Malan joined forces with Hertzog in an attempt to keep South Africa neutral. They were defeated by Smuts. It was a repetition of the familiar pattern of political development, of international events overshadowing local conflicts and ideas. The political scene had flashed back to 1914, when pro- and anti-British Afrikaner elements took sides in the war, and the Nationalist party had regressed to 1912 and now manifested an even more intense emotional nationalism. The conclusion of an immediate peace with Germany was their main platform, for it was argued that the victory of Nazism was inevitable.

The war which fanned the flames of Afrikaner nationalism also made another small spark in Africa glow more brightly. To some extent the black races of the continent, under the control of European imperialisms, were drawn into the conflict. When the warriors, putting aside their shields and spears, were taught to handle rifles, they felt a vague sense of military power and cohesion.

Afrikaners in the Western province, the "cradle" of their nationhood, sneered when they saw the contingents of black West African troops disembark from the convoys and parade through the streets of Cape Town, the mother city of the Afrikaner. Were these, they asked, the crusaders spoken of by Smuts? In French Equatorial Africa de Gaulle was attempting to raise an army. The British were mobilizing the Askari of Central Africa. Smuts, too, attempted to use the vast reserve of black manpower in South Africa. But he had to yield to the unanimous opposition of the Nationalists and of the majority of his own Afrikaner supporters on one vital point: that black

men in South Africa could be used as laborers, stretcher bearers, or truck drivers, but they were not to be trained in the use of small arms. The idea, which nobody expressed publicly, was that in the event of a future conflict the rifle and the machine gun would remain the *ultima ratio* of the white man. It was only when the conflict became desperate that the warlike Zulu were trained as artillerymen. A twenty-five pounder, after all, would be easy to confiscate and hard to conceal. The Zulu Regent named the regiment "Upumalangi"—which means "the sun is rising."

But the war had another vital effect, which could not be restricted or controlled, on race relations in South Africa. It brought industrialization, created alternative employment, and accelerated the movement from the country to the towns. The repercussion of this trend was to become a decisive factor in the general election of 1948.

This Nazification of Afrikaner nationalism, stimulated by the preliminary military successes of Germany, did, however, alarm the powerful and rigidly orthodox Calvinistic churches in the country. In March 1941 they launched a campaign to reject the New Order and to substitute "a Christian National Republic based on a real Calvinist foundation." Their main fear was the possible subjection of church to state. The "leader principle" they rejected as ungodly, for theirs was essentially a theocratic conception of the state.

For more than a year preachers, professors, and politicians were busy concocting this strange brew of politics and theology. Their main axiom was based on the belief in predestination, and accordingly they proclaimed that the Afrikaner people "had the God-ordained mission to maintain its identity, superiority, and rule" in Southern Africa.

There is some scientific evidence that the rate of absorption of Bantu genes into the European population in South Africa is on the increase. This fact was either ignored or condemned as the work of the devil and in order to assist providence in maintaining the ordained "identity," the most rigid laws

against miscegenation were to be introduced and enforced. There is much scientific evidence that the black man in Africa is not inherently intellectually inferior to the white man; that it will not require the course of evolutionary time to develop his skill up to our level. But "superiority" was part of the axiom and justified by many scriptural references to "God-ordained differences between nations." The existence of this "superiority" precluded any possibility, however remote, of equality.

WHILE this speculation was going on in the ranks of the Nationalist party, the rest of South Africa was too preoccupied with its war effort to pay much attention. Hitler had attacked Russia, and Japan was moving southwards in the Pacific. All that seemed important was that the Nationalist party had announced its emphatic rejection of Nazism. Nobody, however, had much time for a detailed study of the ideological alternative. Some time had to elapse before it became obvious that this Christian, Calvinistic republicanism did not have much in common with liberal democracy.

Yet the practical effect of this reformulation of ideological direction was important. It destroyed the Nationalist party's unity of organization and made it impossible for them to win the general election of 1943. Smuts and his government were to be given another five years. Then the Nationalists started to close their ranks. Their party leaders, noted for their astuteness in tactics, realized that a general election could not be fought on an abstruse theological level. They decided to repeat the Hertzog "Black Menace" campaign of 1929 and, like the Nationalist party of those days, to put republicanism in "cold storage." They assured South Africa that the constitution would not be changed on a bare election majority. The issue would be determined by a referendum and then only if the "vast majority of the people" favored the change.

The Nationalist campaign attempted to unify the Europeans by persuading them that they had to face a common enemy, the

black man. The British were promised that their rights would be respected and the Jews were promised that anti-Semitism had been dropped. If a Nationalist government were returned to power it would immediately recognize the State of Israel. (The United party anticipated them.) The eagle, badge of their pro-Nazi days, had hatched a dove. A committee of the party produced a policy labelled "Apartheid," i.e. separateness. Its goal was in effect an absolute territorial division between European and native so that ultimately there would be in South Africa a region in which no native, and another in which no European, would be regarded as a permanent inhabitant. Practical methods of achieving this division were hardly discussed, for the election was mainly fought on the propaganda slogan: "Vote for a White South Africa." All the emphasis was on the "Black Menace."

In August 1946 General Smuts' government had appointed a commission to enquire into the operation of the laws in force in the Union relating to natives in or near urban areas, the native pass laws, and the system of migratory labor. The chairman of this commission was a judge of the Appeal Court and a former Nationalist Minister of Native Affairs. The report is generally considered an outstanding example of thorough sociological research and objective reasoning. It emphasized the fact that the townward movement of the natives was an economic phenomenon which could be guided and regulated but which it was impossible to turn in the opposite direction. South Africa would, therefore, have to take the necessary measures to deal with a permanent urban native population. It rejected the idea of total segregation: "A course of events that can no longer be changed has made South Africa the common home of races differing so radically from each other that there can be no question of assimilation, yet economically and territorially so intertwined that they are simply compelled from moment to moment to regulate their contacts, to bridge their differences, and to settle their disputes."

The fact that the Nationalists won the

election in May of this year is conclusive proof that there is no substantial body of European opinion in South Africa which will even admit the possibility of the natives at some remote future date achieving political equality with the European. Their subjection and inferiority is permanent. Smuts himself has always avoided a clear formulation of his point of view on this problem. His deputy, Jan Hofmeyr, who is regarded as a "liberal," did state that eventually the natives would have to be represented in parliament by their own people. This statement was used by the Nationalists as their main propaganda weapon, for they maintained that Smuts was surrounded by "kaffir brothers"—a phrase which, like "nigger lover" in the deep South, is the height of the white man's scorn and invective in South Africa.

SEEN from the point of view of the white man, the election of the new government raises two important questions: will it, despite enormous practical difficulties, make an attempt to achieve so-called "separateness" of the races, and what will be the reaction of world opinion to a political philosophy which envisages the permanent subjection of the black, colored, and Asiatic races in Southern Africa? History has conditioned the two million Europeans to think almost entirely in terms of the success or failure of their own wishes, interests, and policies. There is the most powerful psychological resistance to the obvious prediction that the 7,000,000 Bantu, 770,000 Coloreds, and 220,000 Asiatics might have an even more important part to play. It is akin to heresy to formulate this policy. Indeed, if the Nationalists could succeed in enforcing "Apartheid" (separateness), or even a semblance of that ideal, their rule, for all practical purposes, would be indefinite. Doubts are raised only by their inability to do so and the fear that failure would result in chaos. That is why there is a certain timidity on the part of the man who asks: "What is the reaction of the people who are to be separated?"

There is no doubt whatsoever about that reaction. On August 3 the African National

Congress, an embryonic political movement, passed this resolution: "Congress is convinced that a policy of segregation or separation leads to racial antagonism and militates against the full economic development of the country as well as cooperation between White and Black for the common good. We are, therefore, convinced that the only policy which can save South Africa from racial conflicts and economic chaos and disaster is a policy of common citizenship, of equality of opportunity for all sections." This protest is inspired by the small but growing class of African intellectuals. The moderation, the plea for "common citizenship," which characterizes the appeal might very well have taken a Black Fascist direction with the slogan, "Africa for the Africans."

Among the mass of uneducated peasants and the detribalized natives in the cities, there are some traces of that "collective resentment and growing racial self-consciousness" which H. G. Wells envisaged. But how is it to be organized and how is it to find expression? The Communist party offers "equality of opportunity." It is, however, a politically ineffective force. In the general election its candidates polled only 1,783 votes out of a total of 1,067,249. The new government intends to suppress all Communist activities with the utmost determination. But what is even more important, the doctrines of Communism, contrary to popular belief, have so far not found favor with the black peasants. There are other difficulties which have to be faced by the Bantu leader of the future, for so far no outstanding personality has come to the fore.

ONCE white South Africa discovers that territorial and economic segregation—the black reserves and the color bar in industry—are not signposts to Utopia, there is the possibility that a more liberal party will emerge—a party which wants the rapid development and education of the natives to enable them to take their place in a multi-racial democracy.

At present such a suggestion made from a political platform would be treated as harmless lunacy.

The Afrikaners are definitely embarked on a new episode in their saga of racial development, the establishment of "Apartheid." The saga will become a tragedy if they fail; and yet it is only in failure that there appears to be any hope for the eight million people in South Africa who, unlike the Afrikaners, have not been "God-ordained to superiority and rule."

At the present moment the Nationalists are busy trying to give Apartheid some semblance of a patchwork reality, having a strong fear of the black man—who was, after all, responsible for their victory. At the same time, the present Parliament reveals clearly the Nationalist desire to placate European sections, particularly the British and the Jews.

Recently, assurances have been given that Jews will be admitted to membership in the Nationalist party, and that the government would not practice discrimination against Jews. For the Nationalists realize they must carefully measure their moves against a possible international reaction which, they know, may once again lead to their downfall.

THE AXIAL AGE OF HUMAN HISTORY

A Base for the Unity of Mankind

KARL JASPERS

PHILOSOPHY strives to interpret history as a single totality. In the West, the philosophy of history developed on the foundation of the Christian faith. In great works from St. Augustine to Hegel, history is seen as the work of God, and God's acts of revelation define the decisive epochs. So late a thinker as Hegel could write: "All history moves toward Christ and begins with Christ. The coming of the son of God is the axis of world history."

But such a view of universal history can be valid only for Christians; Christianity is but one faith, not *the* faith of mankind. Through a specific historical development beginning in late antiquity, Christianity has become the faith of the Western world; but even in the West, the Christian has not allowed his religion to determine his view of history as human experience: even for him, a statement of faith is not a statement about the actual course of history, and sacred history remains in essence different and separate from profane history. The believing Christian can examine the Christian tradi-

tion just as he might examine any other object of his experience.

If there does exist such a thing as an axis, or turning point, in history, it must be based on observable or recorded fact; and it must be valid for all men, including Christians. Such an axis would be that point in history where man first discovered the notion of himself that he has realized since, the point in time where there occurred that shaping of man's being which has produced the most important results. And the existence of this turning point would have to be, if not absolutely demonstrable, at least convincing on an empirical basis for Europeans, for Asiatics, and for all men, without the need to appeal to the criterion of a definite religious doctrine. Only thus could it provide a common frame of historical self-understanding.

Such a historical axis, or turning point, seems to be situated in the years around 500 BCE, in the intellectual development that took place between 800 and 200 BCE. There lies, it appears to me, the most crucial turning point in history; it was then that man as he is today was born. Let us, for the sake of brevity, refer to this period as the "axial age."

IN THIS time of exacerbated nationalisms, the notion of the unity of mankind seems almost an anachronism. Yet if we are to dispel the shadows of barbarism, we must regain some sense of this profound reality. KARL JASPERS suggests that such a sense is to be derived not from any single religious or philosophical system but from a specific historical experience, that of the "axial age" of the years 800-200 BCE. Professor Jaspers, one of the foremost philosophers of modern Europe and a founder of 20th-century Existentialism, was born in Oldenburg in 1883. He is now professor of philosophy at the University of Basel. His latest book, *The Question of German Guilt*, was recently published in this country. His essay "Is Europe's Culture Finished?" appeared in the December 1947 COMMENTARY. This article is translated from the German by Ralph Manheim.

MANY extraordinary developments were crowded into this epoch. In China lived Confucius and Lao-tse, and all the characteristic Chinese philosophical tendencies were born; such thinkers as Mo Ti, Chuang-tze, Liadsi, and innumerable others were at work; in India it was the period of the Upanishads, of Buddha, and, just as in China, every philosophical possibility was then developed, including scepticism, materialism, sophistry, and nihilism; in Iran, Zoroaster taught the dramatic cosmology of the struggle between Good and Evil; in Palestine, it was the age of the Prophets,

from Elijah to Isaiah, Jeremiah, the Deutero-Isaiah; in Greece it was the age of Homer, of the philosophers Parmenides, Heraclitus, and Plato, of the dramatists, of Thucydides and Archimedes. All the great developments that these names suggest occurred in those few centuries—and almost simultaneously in China, India, and the West, though none of these three worlds was aware of the others.

The new element that appeared in this epoch was that man became aware of existence as a whole, of his self, and of his limitations. He experienced the awesomeness of the world and his own weakness. He raised radical questions and, in his quest for liberation and redemption, came face to face with the abyss. While gaining consciousness of his limitations, he set himself the highest aims; he experienced the absolute in the depth of selfhood and in the clarity of transcendence.

Man became aware of consciousness itself; the fact of thought became itself an object of thought. Spiritual battles arose, in which men strove to convince others by the communication of ideas, reasons, experiences. Contradictory possibilities were explored. Discussion, partisanship, the splitting-up of the intellectual sphere into antithetical tendencies that yet remained closely related by their very opposition—all this produced an unrest bordering on spiritual chaos.

This age produced the basic categories within which we still carry on our thinking, and the beginnings of the world religions by which man has lived until today. In every sense, a step was made towards the universal.

Opinions, customs, conditions that had been unconsciously accepted were now scrutinized, questioned, dissolved. The world became a retort in which the substance of tradition, still living and real, was brought to consciousness and thereby transformed.

The age of myth—age of the static and self-evident—came to an end, and there began the battle of rationality and practical experience against myth (*logos* versus *mythos*); the battle for the transcendence of the one God against the demons who did not exist; the battle of an aroused ethical sense against

the false gods. Religion was informed with ethics, and thus the idea of divinity was enhanced. The myth became the vehicle of a language that expressed something entirely different from what the myth had originally meant; the myth became parable. Myths were transformed and given new depth; and during this transition period, new myths were still produced even while the myth as a whole was being destroyed. The mythical world slowly receded, but it remained, in the beliefs of the masses, the background of all life (and therefore it could triumph again in later periods over wide areas).

THIS whole transformation of man's condition may be called a spiritualization. An impulse surging up from the unexplored depths of life loosened the mainstays of existence, transforming stable polarities into antinomies and conflicts. Man was no longer self-sufficient. He had become unsure of himself, and thus open to new and boundless possibilities. He could hear and understand what until then no one had questioned or even noticed. Wonders were made manifest. Along with his world and his ego, Being itself now became perceptible to man, but not finally: the question remained. And his highest upsurge ended in new questions.

For the first time there were philosophers. Men dared to rely on themselves as individuals. Hermits and wandering thinkers in China, ascetics in India, philosophers in Greece, prophets in Israel—they all belong together, however much they may differ in faith, content, and inner orientation. Man was now able to set his inner life in opposition to the whole world; he discovered in himself the principle through which he could rise above both himself and the world.

In speculative thought man soared to the level of Being, which he grasped without duality; subject and object disappeared, and opposites became one. The objective formulations of speculative thought express, ambiguously and in a manner open to misunderstanding, what man in his highest flights experiences as a discovery of himself within the whole of Being, or a *unio mystica*, a

merging with the godhead, or else a transformation of the self into an instrument of God's will, or a consciousness of the self as transcending the arbitrary particularity of the *hic et nunc*.

Imprisoned in a body fettered by passions, separated from the light and only dimly aware of himself, man longs for liberation and redemption; and he finds that he can achieve liberation and redemption in the world, whether it is by an ascent to the Idea; or in *ataraxia*—passive resignation; or by immersion in thought; or in the knowledge of himself and the world as Atman, the Universal Self; or in the experience of Nirvana; or in harmony with the Tao—the cosmic order; or in surrender to the will of God. There are, it is true, great differences among the various faiths, but they all alike come to serve as instruments by which man transcends himself, by which he becomes aware of his own being within the whole of Being, and by which he enters upon pathways that he must travel as an individual. It becomes possible for him to renounce the goods of the world and retire to the desert, the woods, the mountains; he can become a hermit and discover the creative power of solitude, and return to the world as philosopher, sage, prophet. What took place in this axial age was the discovery of what was later to be called reason and personality.

The conquests of individuals did not become the property of all; the distance between the heights of human possibility and the crowd was enormous. But what the individual became, changed everything indirectly; humanity as a whole took a leap forward.

EVEN sociological conditions in China, India, and around the Mediterranean show similarities during this age. There is an abundance of small states and cities, and a battle of all against all, making at first for astonishing prosperity, a development of power and wealth. In China, under the impotent empire of the Chou dynasty, cities and petty states flourished; the over-all political process consisted of the aggrandizement of small states by the subjection of other

small states. In Greece and the Near East, there existed an independent life of small social units, even, in part, for those under the dominion of the Persians. In India also were many independent states and cities.

Within the three worlds, travel and trade created intellectual movement. Previously the world had known relatively stable conditions under which, despite catastrophes, everything repeated itself, horizons were restricted, and intellectual movement was gentle and very slow, unconscious and hence not understood. Now out of constant tension came tumultuous and swift movement, leading to revolution; and this was on the conscious plane.

The Chinese philosophers, Confucius and Mo Ti and others, roamed the country, gathering together in famous places favorable to intellectual life. They established schools which the Sinologists call academies, like those of the Sophists and philosophers in Hellas; or else, like Buddha, they spent their lives wandering from town to town.

Men became conscious of history; an extraordinary age was beginning, but men felt and knew that an endless past had gone before. Thus at the very outset of this awakening of the truly human spirit, man was already preoccupied with memories, conscious of lateness, even of decadence.

Now men wished to take the course of events into their hands: to restore conditions that had existed in the past, or to create new conditions. History was conceived as a series of stages: either as a process of steady deterioration, or as a cycle, or as an ascent. Thinkers began to speculate on how men could best live together, how their lives could best be administered and governed. Ideas of reform inspired political activity. Philosophers wandered from state to state, acted as counselors and teachers, were despised or courted, argued with one another. There is a sociological analogy between Confucius' failure at the court of Wei and Plato's failure in Syracuse, and between the school of Confucius and the academy of Plato, in both of which future statesmen were trained.

This long epoch represents no simple

ascending development. It was both destructive and creative, and its potentialities were never fully realized. The highest possibilities realized in individuals did not become common property because the mass of men could not follow. What started out as freedom of movement ended as anarchy. When the creative power of the epoch was lost the same thing happened in all three worlds: a petrification of dogmas and a general leveling; out of a disorder that had become intolerable there grew an urge toward a new stability, toward the restoration of static conditions of life.

The process of constant change first came to a stop in the political sphere. Great, all-encompassing empires came into being almost simultaneously in China (Chin Shih-Huang Ti), in India (the Maurya dynasty), and in the West (the Hellenistic empires and Rome). Everywhere collapse brought initial gain in the form of a highly systematized order. But nowhere was the relation to what had gone before completely extinguished; the achievements and figures of the axial age became models and objects of veneration: the Han dynasty in China established Confucianism, Asoka established Buddhism in India, and the Augustan age in Rome set up the conscious Greco-Roman cultural tradition.

The universal empires that developed at the end of the axial age were considered to be established for all eternity. But their stability was illusory; although these empires lasted a long time measured by the political standards of the axial age, all ultimately declined and disintegrated, and the subsequent millennia have brought enormous changes. Since the end of the axial age, political history has been a history of the decline of great empires and the founding of new ones.

IN ORDER to establish the truth of a historical conception, it is not enough to glance at a few facts, as I have done. An accumulation of historical analysis must increasingly clarify the thesis, or else it must be abandoned. The observations I have made are intended merely to invite further exploration.

Assuming, however, that this idea of an axial age is true in the main, it seems to illuminate the whole of world history in such a way that something resembling a structure emerges. I shall attempt briefly to indicate this structure:

1. Age-old high civilizations everywhere end with the axial age. The axial age smelts them down, takes them over, submerges them, whether by internal revolution or foreign conquest. Much that existed before the axial age was indeed magnificent—for example, the cultures of Babylonia, Egypt, or the Indus, and the primitive culture of China—but all this has something unawakened about it. The old cultures survived only in those elements that were assimilated by the new beginning and became part of the axial age.

Measured by the radiant humanity of the axial age, a strange veil lies over the preceding ancient cultures, as though in them man had not yet truly come to himself; this remains true despite such impressive, isolated impulses—therefore without general or future influence—as can be found, for example, in an Egyptian literary document, the well-known "Dialogue of a Man Weary of Life with his Soul," or in the Babylonian penitential psalms or the epic of Gilgamesh. The axial age continued to venerate the monumental in religion and religious art, and the corresponding monumental phenomena in the political realm—the great authoritarian states and legal systems. These things were even regarded as prototypes—by Confucius and Plato, for example—but if so, it was in a new conception that informed them with the spirit of the new age.

Thus the imperial idea, which at the end of the axial age achieved new force and, politically speaking, ended the age, was inherited from the old monolithic civilizations. But whereas the imperial idea had originally been the culture-creating principle, it now served to entomb and stabilize a declining culture. It is as if the principle which had once served to drive humanity upward, and which had been a despotic principle *de facto*, now broke through in the form of a *con-*

scious despotism that congealed and preserved like frost.

2. Mankind is still living by what happened in the axial age, by what it created and what it thought. In all its later flights mankind returns to that age and gathers new fire. The return to this beginning is the ever-recurring event in China, India, and the West; the renaissances that have brought new spiritual surges have consisted in the recollection and reawakening of the possibilities of the axial age.

3. Although the axial age began within a relatively limited area of the globe, its historical effect was universal. Those peoples that did not participate in the developments of that age have remained "primitive peoples," continuing the unhistorical lives they had been leading for tens or hundreds of thousands of years. Men living outside of the three worlds of the axial age either remained apart from the stream of history or were drawn into it by coming into contact with one or the other of the three intellectual centers of radiation, as was the case, for example, with the Germanic and Slavic peoples in the West, and the Japanese, the Malays, and the Siamese in the East. Some primitive peoples died out as a result of this contact. All men living after the axial age were either relegated to the status of primitive peoples or took part in the fundamental new world process. Once history had begun, the life of primitive peoples took on the character of an enduring prehistory, which became increasingly restricted in area and has only recently definitively ended.

4. When the three worlds that experienced the axial age meet with one another, a profound understanding is possible. They recognize when they meet that their concerns are the same. Despite great distances, each deeply affects the others. To be sure, there is no truth common to all three that can be put into objective statement—this exists only in science, with its conscious and compelling methodology, which can be disseminated without change throughout the world and to which all men are called to contribute—but, even so, the authentic and un-

conditional truth that is lived historically by men of different origins is reciprocally seen and heard.

To summarize: out of the vision of the axial age grow the questions and criteria through which we approach all previous and all subsequent development. The high civilizations that went before lose their distinct contours, and the peoples who were their vehicles become invisible as they merge into the movement of the axial age. Prehistoric peoples remain prehistorical until they are absorbed in the historical movement that spreads out from the axial age—or until they die out. The axial age assimilates everything else. From that age history gains the only structure and unity that survives, or that has survived up to now.

THE fact of the threefold axial age is a kind of miracle, in the sense that any really adequate explanation lies beyond our present scientific horizon. And in any case, the hidden meaning of this phenomenon cannot be found empirically, as if it were a meaning that someone had consciously sought to create. Rather, to inquire after this meaning is to ask: what are we to make of this fact, what does it give to us? If, in attempting to answer these questions, expressions may occur that make it appear as if we were thinking of some plan of providence, they are to be understood only as metaphors.

a) Really to see the axial age, to gain it as a foundation for our universal view of history, means: to gain something that is common to all mankind above and beyond all differences of faith. It is one thing to see the unity of history only from the background of one's own faith; it is quite another to conceive the unity of history in communication with every other human background, combining one's own consciousness with that which is foreign to one. In this sense, it may be said of the centuries between 800 and 200 BCE that they constitute the empirically ascertainable axis of history for *all* men.

The transcendental history of Christian revealed faith knows creation, fall, the steps of revelation, prophecies, the coming of

God's son, redemption, and last judgment. As the faith of a historical group of men, it remains intact. But it is not on the basis of revelation that men can come together; the basis of solidarity can only be experience. Revelation is the form of a particular historical faith; experience is accessible to man as man. Through our experience of history we—all men—can know in common the reality of the universal transformation of mankind that took place in the axial age. This transformation was, to be sure, limited to China, India, and the West, but, although there was at first no contact among these three worlds, it laid the basis for universal history, it drew the minds of all men into it.

b) The threefold historical form of the great advance of the axial age is something like a summons to boundless communication. To see and to understand others helps us toward the greatest clarity concerning ourselves, helps us to overcome that narrowness which is the danger in every self-enclosed history, and to make a leap into the distance. This venture in boundless communication is once again the secret of achieving humanity, not in the prehistoric past but in ourselves.

The call to such communication—which arises from the very fact that our historical origins are threefold—is the strongest force opposing the fallacy that any faith enjoys exclusive possession of the truth. For faith must always be conditioned by historical existence; it cannot, like scientific truth, be stated universally for all. The claim to exclusive truth—that weapon of fanaticism, of human pride, of self-deception through will to power, that scourge of the West in particular, with its secularization in dogmatic philosophies and so-called scientific *Weltanschauungen*—can be overcome precisely by the knowledge that God has revealed himself historically in many ways and opened up many paths to himself. It is as if God, speaking the language of universal history, were warning us against exclusive claims.

c) If the axial age takes on significance according to the depth of our immersion in it, the question arises: is this age and its creations a criterion for all that has happened

since? Even if we disregard the quantitative aspect, the geographical scope of political events, the preeminence that intellectual manifestations have enjoyed through the centuries, do we not find that the austere greatness, the creative clarity, the depth of meaning, the *élan* toward new intellectual worlds manifested in the axial age constitute the intellectual summit of all history up until now? For all their greatness and uniqueness, does not Virgil pale before Homer, and Augustus before Solon?

Surely any mechanical answer would be false. What has come later has assuredly its own value, which was not present in that which went before, a maturity of its own, a sublime splendor, a spiritual depth, above all in its "exceptional" manifestations.

WE CANNOT organize history into a hierarchy simply by setting up some universal idea and drawing automatic inferences from it. But the conception of the axial age may lead us to question what came later, perhaps even to form a prejudice against it—and this may lead us to a recognition of that which is truly new and great and which does not belong to the axial age. For example: the student of philosophy who has spent months with the Greeks may find in St. Augustine a liberation from too much coolness and impersonality, since Augustine raises questions of conscience that were unknown to the Greeks but have been with us ever since; but then a period spent in the study of Augustine may impel him to return to the Greeks, in order to cleanse himself from the mounting impurity. Nowhere on earth is there an ultimate truth, a perfect salvation.

The axial age was shattered. History continued.

I hold only this as certain: whether we adopt or reject this thesis, the conception of an axial age affects our contemporary consciousness of our situation and of our history in fundamental ways which I have been able to intimate only partially. What is involved is nothing less than the question of how the unity of mankind can become concrete for each of us, of whatever tradition.

GRANDFATHER MENDELE AS I REMEMBER HIM

The Founder of Modern Yiddish Literature

CHAIM TCHERNOWITZ

WHEN you entered "Grandfather" Mendele's house you passed through several long, dark, almost empty corridors and rooms without meeting a soul until a tall, lean woman emerged from the haze. She would scowl, mutter to herself, and motion with her hand. At last you saw him, sitting hunched over a long table, only his forehead visible, engrossed in writing. He let you stand for a little while. Then he would slide his spectacles over his brow and peer at you sharply as though not recognizing you. Presently he

would rise, the full tall height of him, and greet you with a warm, cheerful "aha," and the conversation began.

Now his "aha's" weren't the same for all callers—he had a special tune for people he was particularly close to, and another for people he disliked. His "aha" was a barometer of his spirits on that particular day. Distinguished people, whom he dubbed "my men," were immediately read to from something he had just penned. He read from ridiculously long sheets of paper—no one seemed to know where he managed to procure them—that from a distance appeared covered with myriads of dots and dashes. He never permitted his caller, who had to sit quietly in rapt attention, to hold the manuscript, or even look on with him. Intermittently Mendele cast sidelong glances at his guest to determine whether he was grasping adequately the various meanings and nuances of his writing, and woe to the man who didn't appear properly impressed and understanding. For Grandfather Mendele never merely prattled as ordinary mortals do; his conversation was always saturated with hidden meanings. And when he became lost in his exuberance he broke into a childish laughter, poked his thumb into his listener's abdomen by way of emphasizing that his speech was teeming with mysteries and secrets. Similarly, his writing demanded the utmost in concentration from readers.

Once the reading was done with, Mendele would stand up and embark on a long discourse while pacing up and down the room. From time to time he stopped, raised his finger, reared back and shot a glance at the caller to see whether he was comprehending fully. And to comprehend him wasn't easy. Conversation for Mendele was a matter of three or four hours. The subject had to be

CHAIM TCHERNOWITZ, perhaps better known among Hebrew readers under the pen name Rav Tzair ("The Young Rabbi"), is one of the leading figures in Jewish scholarship and Hebrew literature. In these reminiscences of Mendele Mocher Sforim (1836-1917), Dr. Tchernowitz recaptures the quality of that Jewish renaissance of the late 19th and early 20th centuries which produced Sholom Aleichem, J. L. Peretz, Hayim Bialik, and other larger-than-life figures of the culture of Eastern Europe. Mendele (Shalom Jacob Abramowitsch) is commonly regarded as the father of modern Yiddish literature; in his greatest works—notably *Dos Kleine Menshele* ("The Little Man") and *Die Klyatshe* ("The Dobbin")—he satirized the ruling powers in the Jewish community, and brought into the Jewish literature of Eastern Europe, for the first time since the Middle Ages, a concern with secular experience: nature, love, personality. A translation of his story "The Red Calf" appeared in the November 1946 COMMENTARY. Dr. Tchernowitz was born in Lithuania in 1871 and ordained rabbi in 1896. Since 1923 he has been in the United States as professor of Talmud at the Jewish Institute of Religion, and he is the founder and editor of *Bitzaron*, a Hebrew literary monthly published in New York. This study of Mendele is part of the book *Misechet Zichronot—Chachmei Odessa* ("Memoirs—Sages of Odessa") published in Hebrew in 1945. It has been translated by Maurice T. Galpert.

covered and treated from every conceivable angle, and books were consulted when necessary. And it was never mere chitchat. Redolent was it of the lofty discourses of the Talmudical sages on the Torah. At first it was difficult to grasp what he was driving at—so disjointed were his words. But slowly his talk would grow lucid and take on meaning, like sun rays breaking through the clouds. The edifice of his discourse, which was begun with loose, stray words, took shape slowly and surely.

MENDELE loved to employ allusions and images in his speech. He was deft at caricaturing a person, particularly an opponent. He would twist his nose, which was unusually agile, contort his body, gesticulate with his hands, and straightway a man loomed up before you all but clothed in flesh and bones. He was very adroit at annihilating an adversary with apt verse from the Bible. For his aversions, the "Lovers of Zion," whom he labelled collectively "the red Jews," he had individual sobriquets. These he appropriated from the names of musical tropes appearing over the names of leading figures in the biblical books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Ussishkin, for example, he called "Kadma V'Azla," and this he trilled in the manner of an officer issuing commands to his troops. Frankfeld, another member of the group, he nicknamed "Telisha Gedola."

Mendele himself was an amalgam of all the characters and personalities that graced Jewish life. One could detect in him the rabbi, preacher, teacher, philosopher, and sceptic. Sometimes he was veritably a *tanna*, sometimes the dean of a yeshiva, at other times a kind of Maimonides, or Emanuel of Rome, or Ibn Ezra, or Leon de Modena. But he wasn't a real synthesis of these personalities—each one was preserved in Mendele in his entirety, as though a separate compartment were reserved for each. One day you would be speaking to Mendele the scholar, another day to Mendele the rabbi, and then suddenly to Mendele the atheist. Once I recall bringing to him my grandfather, Reb Solomon Drozd, of blessed mem-

ory, a rabbi in a small town, but a noted scholar nonetheless. My grandfather was sitting with his *streiml* on his head, while Mendele, bareheaded, sat across from him. At first they glared at each other, but it wasn't long before the two were clutching at each other's coats, debating and arguing, hurling biblical verses and Talmudical quotations at one another, as was the custom. Indeed they looked like two sages of yore, down to the last detail.

"There are in me two Mendeles," he used to say—the wise, pious Jew of the Beth Hamidrash, and the modern sceptic. He loved Jews and Judaism, but he also criticized trenchantly the pettiness he found in Jewish life of the Diaspora. He used to say: There are two in the world who hate Israel, the Lord in heaven above, and I on the earth below; but he always said this in jest. Only a man who loved his people dearly could have spoken in this wise about them. When he discussed Judaism he talked with great fervor about its grandeur, like the prophets of old. And again like the prophets he cast dire imprecations on his people when he chastised them.

MENDELE was as proficient in the art of living as he was in literature. From his artistic promontory he could be both serious and sportive. He was humble and proud, irascible and sweet-tempered, depending upon the person he was with. In the company of earnest men he was serious, and with frivolous men jocose. Directly a man approached, Mendele surveyed him from head to toe, peered into the deepest recesses of his soul, and treated him accordingly. And woe to the "small people" when they were lashed by his tongue. His chief hates were the pretentious pillars of the community who were always engaged in saving Jews and Judaism for their own benefit and aggrandizement; they were quickly deflated in his presence.

When Mendele came to Odessa to become principal of the community Hebrew school, the noted Dr. Schwabacher who hailed from Germany was rabbi of the first

liberal congregation in that city, the Broder congregation. A remarkable orator he was who insisted on preaching in German, albeit his younger listeners understood not a word of what he said.

Now it was said of Schwabacher that he wrote out all his sermons and committed them to memory word for word. Since he never ventured to speak without meticulous preparation, rumor had it that he had eulogies prepared in advance for every notable in the city. Thus he would never be caught unprepared. One day it occurred that as the celebrated Cantor Blumenthal lay ill, approaching death, the rabbi paid him a visit. Lying on his cot Blumenthal asked the rabbi that his last wish be fulfilled. Rabbi Schwabacher gave him his solemn oath that whatsoever the request it would be fulfilled. Whereupon the cantor made his strange request. It was bruited, he said, that the rabbi had eulogies prepared for all the prominent citizens of the community, and since he was the cantor he surmised that possibly for him a eulogy was also in readiness. Therefore he besought the rabbi that his last wish be honored, that he be permitted to hear the eulogy while he was still alive. The rabbi, compelled to honor the request by his previous oath, procured a copy of the eulogy, which in truth had long since been ready and waiting, and with appropriate funereal voice and gestures read it to the dying man.

Schwabacher was overbearing and contemptuously proud. In greeting someone he suited his handshake to the person's station. A few received his whole hand, others three or four fingers, and still others only one finger. When Mendele came to town to superintend the Hebrew school, propriety demanded that he call on Rabbi Schwabacher. But upon learning about the rabbi's pretentiousness, Mendele refused to meet him, even after the latter had dispatched several emissaries to invite him. Some time later, however, when they did meet through chance at an inn, the rabbi greeted him cheerfully and stretched out his entire hand—an honor which he reserved

for the very few. Whereupon Mendele solemnly slipped him one finger. Never again did Schwabacher mete out his handshakes according to the person's rank.

Another incident concerns an official in Odessa who was notorious for his vile habits, and was a kleptomaniac besides. Once while dining at the home of a distinguished lady, he "happened" to thrust a sterling silver spoon into his pocket. Word of this got around, and the man became the laughingstock of the entire region. Several days later he came to Mendele to complain of his being slandered in public. "Why are you so incensed?" countered Mendele. "After all, you *were* sitting at the table, and there *were* silver spoons on it, and you *are* a thief—why then should you not be suspected of something that you really are?" Never did Mendele indulge in flattery and blandishments.

MENDELE did not have a systematic, orderly philosophy of Judaism. It was all *yiddishkeit* to him. Everything, whether old or new, the Bible, the Talmud, philosophy, *haskalah*, the rabbinate, the yeshiva, the Beth Hamidrash—everything he termed *yiddishkeit*. In general, he disdained the new, whether in language, literature, or life; hence, modern writers, with their involved metaphors and inventions, irked him. He believed the style of the Mishna and Midrash to be a model of lucidity and brevity. Looking back, I can truthfully say that Mendele really taught me how to write. When first I began writing he liked to peruse my manuscripts, and would even come to me to read and correct my work. A novice in writing, I was under the erroneous impression that the longer a manuscript the more creditable it was; accordingly, I was forever amplifying and expanding. He, however, would exclaim: "Let me wring it out for you!" and he would proceed to condense an entire page into several sentences.

The Zionists regarded him as an anti-Zionist. He simply couldn't stomach those who professed allegiance to Zionism for the

honor and prestige it would bring them, those who made it the be-all and end-all of Judaism. He was too steeped in the world of the old Jew to comprehend the din and clamor of these hopefuls. He simply could not understand them and their aims. To him Judaism meant a synagogue, a Beth Hamidrash, a yeshiva, the Sabbath, the holidays. But what did they want, these fledglings? He didn't know. Palestine? Why not? Who disagrees with them? Certainly it's part and parcel of Judaism—the Temple was in Palestine, the sacrifices, the Wailing Wall, the cave of Machpelah, Rachel's grave. What is this fuss over offices, charity boxes, collection plates? Grandfather Mendele disliked anything that smelled of office and position. He was forever wrangling with Ussishkin, leader of the Lovers of Zion in Odessa, and was furious when the latter labelled him an anti-Zionist.

To refute this accusation he would relate the following parable: Once in Zhitomir he and his colleague, Chaim Zelig Slonimsky, were walking from the rabbinical academy where they both were teaching. It was a fine summer day, and Slonimsky asked Mendele to step into his house. There being no one at home, they took off their coats and shoes, stretched out on the beds in the bedroom and chatted. Suddenly a woman walked in, stationed herself near the door and gazed at them in amused astonishment. "What do you wish here?" they asked her. Whereupon she replied: "Fine thing! Two prominent Jews like yourselves are sprawled on my beds, and you're asking me what I want here." Then they realized that being engrossed in conversation they had unconsciously entered the wrong house. . . . Similarly, Mendele would continue, Ussishkin is asking me, Mendele, what I want with Palestine. Why isn't it my Palestine? I lived there all my life, purchased with Abraham the cave of Machpelah from Ephron the Hittite, wandered with Jacob to Paddanaram and quarrelled with Laban, fought with Esau, came with Jacob and his sons into Egypt, wandered in the desert for forty years, warred together with Joshua against

the thirty-one kings, conquered Canaan, built the Temple and destroyed it. And now being of a sudden interested in my Palestine, stretched out on my bed, as it were, Ussishkin has the effrontery to ask me what I want here!

Once he came to me blind with rage. He had heard that in one of the Lovers of Zion's homes the Sabbath was being publicly desecrated. "Is that proper?" he fumed. "Where is their *yiddishkeit*?" Since that time Bialik has told me that in his last years Mendele became very observant and devout, and walked about all day wearing a skull-cap. I never did see him then, but it did not amaze me at all that he should have wanted in his final days to express his deep love for traditional Judaism by performing the ancient precepts and commandments of the Torah.

I FIRST met Mendele in Odessa in 1896, having come directly from the Kovno yeshiva after the death of my teacher, Rabbi Isaac Elchanan, of blessed memory. Mendele, Menashe Margolies, and other *maskilim* ("enlighteners") had been contemplating for years the founding in Odessa of a modern rabbinical seminary where secular subjects would also be taught, so that the Jewish community would no longer be dependent upon the offensive crown rabbis appointed by the government to head the Jewish community. But this meant violating Russian law, which forbade the teaching of secular subjects in Jewish schools. Mendele, however, was an old hand at outwitting and baffling the Russian officers. He was not a revolutionary—his better sense counselled him against the use of force—but he was always devising techniques and schemes to get around oppressive czarist "law." In this he was aided and abetted considerably by his friend Menashe Margolies, a noted attorney.

Shortly thereafter Mendele and Margolies dug up an old law dating from the reign of Nicholas I, which declared that a yeshiva is comparable to a higher school of Jewish knowledge, and could therefore pre-

pare men for the rabbinate. Now there was an old yeshiva in Odessa which had been certified years before in the days of Czar Nicholas. Mendele and Margolies therefore went to work, interpreted "Jewish knowledge" as meaning history, philosophy, and Hebrew literature, and decided to convert the old yeshiva into a modern rabbinical seminary, teaching secular subjects as well as Jewish studies. But a suitable dean was lacking for the new school, whereupon Mendele decided that I would be just the man for the position. He himself was appointed by the government as chairman of a committee to set up the new modern yeshiva.

One whole summer I spent with Mendele formulating the curriculum. I shan't dwell here on the difficulties, both internal and external, which we had to overcome before the school was finally established. Even with so-called government approval, uncommon ingenuity was necessary to include certain secular subjects in the curriculum. That our plans were well formulated was proven later. That entire summer I worked so closely and intimately with Grandfather Mendele that for all practical purposes he had become my grandfather and counsellor, in life as well as in literature.

It was difficult for me at first to become accustomed to his singular way of thinking. I had to utilize every ounce of gray matter before I could grasp what he was saying, so that it took me quite a while to train myself to work smoothly with him on the curriculum. Having just been graduated from the yeshiva of Rabbi Isaac Elchanan which insisted rigidly on a rabbi's mastering the entire Torah and Talmud, I found it impossible at first to accept Mendele's lenient Talmudical requirements for graduation. For example, he asked me: How many pages and topics of, say, tractate *Baba Kama* should a prospective rabbi study in order to master it? My reply was that he obviously had to study and know thoroughly the entire tractate from beginning to end. He, however, convinced me that the Talmud is an inexhaustible treasury, and that

one must perforce differentiate between essential and unessential portions of any tractate. He showed me that it was possible to omit many pages of a tractate without impairing one's knowledge of the basic ideas. This notion that the Talmud contained incidental and ancillary matter was, indeed, a revolutionary concept.

From then on I began studying Talmud anew. Mendele was not a *lamdan* or scholar in the usual sense, but he was perspicacious and keen, and could apprehend instantly the cardinal ideas of any Talmudical topic, however involved. By way of illustration he began teaching me the first few pages in *Baba Kama* line by line. "If I were to delete this sentence," he asked, "would the underlying theme of the subject matter still be clear and intelligible?" If I replied in the affirmative, he would strike it out with a pencil. If I replied in the negative, he would let it go. When we finished I realized that two-thirds of the text had been removed without distorting or impairing the fundamental concepts. In this fashion Mendele and I traversed other tractates, Maimonides, and even the *poskim* or codifiers. What a different Talmud we would have today, I thought, had Mendele, with his extraordinary talent for lucidity and conciseness, been one of its early commentators! It was then I hit on the idea of publishing an abridged version of the Talmud—a project which I was to accomplish years later.

BESIDES Talmud, Mendele taught me the simple elements of good behavior. As a yeshiva student I had no conception of time and punctuality; no yeshiva student has. You recited the evening prayer at any time from sunset until dawn. You studied constantly—there is certainly no prescribed time for studying the Torah, for it is written: "Thou shalt meditate on it day and night." You walked in on a person at all hours of the day or night. But with Mendele it was different. When he set a definite time for me to call on him, I had to be punctual. If I came late, he would on occasion send

me home, and then ask for me again after chiding me soundly for my tardiness.

Mendele liked to tell about his student days in the yeshiva, when he slept on a bench in the Beth Hamidrash, and ate each day's meals with a different sympathetic householder, if he was fortunate. But he avoided talking about any other facts and incidents of his past, about his family or his wanderings. And if he did happen to mention some past experience parenthetically, he dismissed it promptly as an unpleasant intrusion. Not even to his grandchildren, with whom he was very intimate, did he reveal details of his personal history, although he always urged them to confide in him.

It is common belief that Mendele in his youth went about with a band of beggars, Fishke the Lame, the subject of one of his books, among them. I recall his once having mentioned this fact amusedly, and though he intimated that it was a fabrication by some of his opponents, he never really denied it.

Mendele liked to speak of his achievements in literature and life, and yet one could detect no braggadocio in his speech. In fact, he spoke with humility, as if implying that almost anyone could attain that status if he only did such and such and wrote such and such. Didn't many succeed before him?

Mendele did physical exercise each day, and would boast that he could bend his finger all the way back. He was an excellent swimmer, and when we went bathing together, he loved to perform manifold antics in the water.

GRANDFATHER Mendele was a man of singular wisdom and great prudence, possibly a greater sage than a writer. He was not given to theoretical and metaphysical speculation. It was the vital, real problems of Jews that concerned him, not the abstract issues of Judaism. His conception of Judaism was grounded in the day-by-day life and affairs of his people. Apparently, the metaphysical problems which had in-

terested him during his younger days had no lure for him in his old age. He never speculated on the survival of Judaism; for him this was axiomatic, requiring no discussion. It was something he believed in deeply. He was, for the most part, optimistic about the destiny of his people. Persecutions of the Jews never drove him to despair. He accepted them as a matter of course, as though they were the necessary concomitants of being a Jew.

He tended towards Dubnow's theory, but without extensive philosophizing, that the Jews would survive wherever they dwelt. It wasn't the Diaspora that he feared, but rather the danger of assimilation and apostasy. Thus, for instance, he writes in *The Dobbins* of the poor animal who has been craving for years to upset the wagon and escape from her master, but who cannot do so because she is sunk and trapped in mire.

I recall that several of us, Dubnow, Bialik, Ravnitzki, and a few other intellectuals, were once standing around discussing the miserable plight of the Jews. We were concerned with their shabby, straitened existence in the Pale Settlement and wondered how they could possibly make ends meet. Whereupon Mendele broke in: "Aren't we all here making a living through other Jews?"

Perhaps that is why the question of Palestine never really concerned him. He was a Jew of the Diaspora, every inch of him, and never felt the need or the urgency to quit it. It was for him the natural condition of the Jew, closely and inextricably bound up with his people's venerable history. His deep love for his coreligionists and their life in the immediate present never permitted him to aspire to some other higher and better world for them.

Mendele was a wonderful combination of man and Jew. It was impossible to discern where Mendele the Jew ended and where Mendele the man of the world, the creator and critic, began. Sometimes it seemed that he was actually standing at a distance and peering into the Jew and the man within him with scrutinizing eye. Everything lived

in him, Judaism of the past as well as the present. The prophets, sages, the debating Tannaim, even the "ox that gored the cow" and "the egg that was laid on the holiday"—all seemed to dwell in him and spring into life at a word or gesture. He was very sensitive to the pain of all animate beings, animal as well as human.

For him writing was an integral part of living, feeling, and observing—a kind of conversation. When you were in his house, you never felt that you were interfering with his work; in fact, he was fond of taking off a few hours to converse. Writing was pleasant for him, not a drudgery. Occasionally he would boast of having written *The Dobbin* in three consecutive days and nights, as though impelled by the Holy Spirit. He was forever speaking of his early works, and, accordingly, devoted much of his time during his later years to revising them. These revisions were actually complete rewritings, although they were penned above the words on the original manuscripts.

MENDELE was a wondrous phenomenon in our literary history—he appeared on the scene late in life, for he really didn't find himself until he was sixty. He began his career by writing popular essays on nature and *haskala*, after the fashion of the day. Even his early fiction, *The Dobbin* and *The Little Man*, was permeated with moralizing and didacticism. It is only in his later work, such as *Fishke the Lame* and *The Vale of Tears*, that the artist in him finally triumphs over the moralist, and the real stylist and craftsman emerges. Undoubtedly the Mendele I knew—I made his acquaintance in the last years of his life when he was already at his zenith—differed radically from the young Shalom Jacob Abramowitsch. But he was forever denying that any changes had occurred in him; perhaps that is why he liked to speak with such pride of his early creations. Occasionally, however, the young Abramowitsch peeped out, and then I was glad that I hadn't known him when he was young.

Mendele earned his livelihood as prin-

cipal of the Odessa Hebrew School. The structure itself was large, attractive, and modern, and Mendele resided there in several spacious, comfortable rooms. When classes were dismissed, he used to stroll up and down the classrooms, by himself or with his guests. When I came to Odessa he was already serving as principal emeritus, although he didn't know it. It seems that the trustees and teachers of the school, not wanting to hurt his feelings, had, without telling him, appointed a younger man in his stead. Frequently he burst into a classroom, shoved the teacher or even the principal aside, and proceeded to lecture to the students for hours without regard for the bell. He even rebuked the teachers on occasion and issued instructions which they carried out only in his presence.

Mendele never really derived much pleasure from his children. His one son, who had a talent for poetry, dabbled in Christianity and married out of the faith. Mendele ignored the entire matter. His non-Jewish daughter-in-law was in certain respects more devoted to Judaism than her husband. She cherished Jewish rites and customs and preferred the company of Jewish *maskilim* and authors. Once she asked her father-in-law on an ordinary weekday to recite the *kidush* for her. This he did ardently. On another occasion while I was at Mendele's house he introduced me to his son, who had just arrived from his home in Petersburg, as "our rabbi." Whereupon the young man flushed and disappeared at once. Mendele had two daughters, unattractive spinsters, who for some reason never spoke and were never spoken to. His wife, Pesales, was a parsimonious, overbearing creature who kept her hands on the purse strings and made Mendele plead and supplicate whenever he was in need of a few coins. But withal she was a devoted wife who tended him like a mother. For some reason she disliked us intensely and whenever he was about to go out with us she exhorted him "not to go too far." She considered us a gang of garrulous idlers; all we got from her was a reluctant grunt. And when guests

arrived and Mendele bade her serve something, she would slink in with an allotted number of sugar lumps and portions of tea and vanish noiselessly out of the room.

Grandfather Mendele looked upon us as his grandchildren. We had to divulge all our innermost anxieties and aches, and he would listen to us attentively, patiently, and offer counsel and advice. Sometimes he would call us back after we had already left, sit us down and consider our problem further from a different angle. For a while I used to see him about two or three times a week, and usually accompanied by Bielik and Ravnitzki. We were closest to him and he loved especially to talk to us and hear our tales. If any great length of time elapsed without my seeing him. I longed for him terribly. Frequently I came to him laden with congregational problems and cares, and after a short chat found my problems solved and my cares dispelled, as though a heavy stone had been rolled off my chest.

MENDELE was a man of vast erudition, particularly in the Bible, Talmud, and Jewish philosophy. He was at home in practically every branch of learning, and always had his own unique penetrating viewpoint. Experts in various fields marvelled at his perspicacious and original insights, and yet

he was seldom seen reading a book except an old worn copy of the Bible and a volume of the Midrash that never left his desk. Whenever someone engaged him in discourse he spoke as if he had just come from a fresh perusal of the Talmud, Maimonides, Halevi's *Kuzari*, or other philosophical tracts. He had an uncanny aptitude for going directly to the heart of any issue. He was that rare combination—a thinker and man of action, both in Jewish and secular matters.

Whenever I try to form a mental image of our sages of yore, especially the rabbis of the Midrash, I invariably think of Mendele. Wasn't he, too, like Ben Sira, an author and sage, a mentor and moralist on both Jewish and worldly things? And when Mendele began speaking I used to think of that stately Midrashic expression, "Rabbi Oshia opened his lecture with the text." "Rabbi Mendele opened his lecture with the text" would have suited him precisely.

Had Mendele lived in the days of the Talmud doubtless his wise and perceptive utterances would have been recorded together with that of the other sages. It is indeed regrettable that his countless observations and sayings were not inscribed and preserved when he uttered them, and that only a scattered few repose in the aging memories of his pupils and friends.

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An Economic Opportunity for the New State

ERNEST ASCHNER

TYPICAL of the official Israeli attitude toward oil are two recent statements dealing with the questions of the Negev and the internationalization of Haifa. Asked by a *New York Times* correspondent "whether Israel might not be especially interested in the Negev because of rumors that there were rich petroleum deposits beneath its surface," Israel's Prime Minister David Ben Gurion was reported to have replied: "We do not care for oil. We need land and we will settle it." Concerning Haifa, the *New York Herald Tribune* reported an Israeli government statement as follows: "Holding that the Haifa Port and oil refineries must remain an integral part of the Jewish state, the government has promised that valid foreign concessions will be respected, but 'beyond that there is no justification for interference with Israel's sovereign rights.'"

These statements still reflect the traditional attitude of Jewish public opinion in Palestine to oil. Responsible Jewish leaders have always regarded oil in the Middle East as a major impediment to the progress of Zionism. Even Jewish circles in America that uphold free enterprise and capitalism in principle, believe paradoxically that the big

British and American oil companies exploring the subsoil of foreign deserts pursue schemes that are somehow illegitimate and sinister. These ventures are stigmatized *a priori* as "oil imperialism." Yet there is little to show that they are not legitimate business enterprises governed by the same economic considerations that apply to the production of other minerals or commodities. Basically there is no difference between British capital invested in Dead Sea potash and British capital invested in oil in Kirkuk.

From the Jewish point of view there is, of course, quite a difference if in the one case Jewish capital, labor, and Palestinian resources are involved, and, in the other case, Jewish enterprise is practically excluded.

Admittedly the various technical aspects of locating and producing oil, its economic, political, and military significance and problems, together with the geographic distribution of oil resources and the competing forces at work in obtaining concessions, all combine to present a rather complex and bewildering picture of giant forces engaged in dark machinations. Admittedly, too, oil is the dominating factor in many spheres of modern industry, communications, and war armament, just as it is a determining factor in the political future of the Middle East. Yet one would think that precisely for this last reason none of the peoples of the Middle East could afford to disregard oil developments in their midst—least of all the young State of Israel.

THE planners of Israel's national economy think, traditionally, in terms of reclamation of soil, industrialization, and maritime expansion as the main ways in which to increase the human absorptive capacity of the new country. So far, oil, which could play a

DOES a doctrinaire suspicion of "oil imperialism" stand in the way of Israel's economic development and a favorable settlement of territorial claims? ERNEST ASCHNER here suggests that the new state of Israel would do well to reexamine its attitude towards the British and American oil interests that have played, and continue to play, so important a role in the Palestine problem. Dr. Aschner was formerly chief of the Haifa bureau of the *Palestine Post*, and has been a Reuters and London *Daily Mail* correspondent. After settling in Palestine in 1934, he traveled widely in the Middle East; he was born in Berlin in 1912 and is now living in the United States.

major role in the industrialization and maritime expansion programs, is, because of the negative attitude of the Jewish leaders, conspicuous by its absence from the official and private perspectives of Israel.

During the time of the mandate the executives of Iraq Petroleum Company (I.P.C.), the largest oil interest in Palestine, made no secret of the fact that they depended for the security of their investments on the good will of the Arabs, who gave them their oil concessions and who formed the majority of their workers. They employed, however, a token number of Jews on their maintenance and operating jobs and had some construction work at the Abadan (Iran) and Haifa refineries done by Jewish contractors. The Jews on the other hand never bothered much about the activities of the British and American oil men in the Middle East.

If the relations, during the time of the mandate, between British oil company management and the representatives of the Jewish Agency, the Jewish Federation of Labor (Histadrut), and Jewish private or semi-private contractors always left much to be desired, this coolness was not altogether the fault of the British oil men. Not only did nobody in authority among Palestine's Jews ever encourage friendly relations with the British executives of the I.P.C. or of the Haifa refinery, but the Jewish attitude even discouraged social contacts and individual approaches that might have contributed towards mutual understanding and respect.

So long as the Jews had no voice in the execution of oil ventures in Palestine there was perhaps good reason for their negative attitude toward those who neither had to take, nor did take, Jewish interests into consideration. But now that the picture has changed and the Israelis are masters of a territory that has seen and may yet see important oil developments, it is difficult to conceive why this attitude should be perpetuated. After all the Israelis now have the responsibility of a state and they can ill afford to indulge in the luxury of positions that have at best only an ideological and not a moral basis.

DO THE Israelis really want to have nothing to do with the production and processing of one of the most important and strategic raw materials of modern times? Can Israel afford to disregard the opportunities that present themselves to her, and which, if properly appreciated, would help solve so many of her most pressing economic problems? Should she not make a special effort to overcome whatever obstacles there are to her participation in the exploitation of Middle East oil?

The pocketing of royalties for granting the right of way to a pipeline or for the establishment of other foreign oil installations within their territory is perhaps something the Israelis feel not to be in keeping with their conception of national dignity. But why should they not become active partners and productive factors—not parasitic landlords—in a business that has brought progress and prosperity to other countries? What is there sinister or unethical about operating refineries in conjunction with foreign investors? What is there imperialistic or undignified in establishing auxiliary chemical industries in Palestine and in building or purchasing and operating tanker fleets to transport crude oil and refinery products across the Mediterranean to Europe? Israel's sovereignty would surely not be endangered if she attracted more foreign pipelines to her territory and guaranteed the security of oil installations and personnel there. It is high time that the vast possibilities of obtaining capital so vitally needed for the upbuilding of the country and for increasing the absorptive capacity for new immigrants should be acknowledged and made part of the overall planning of the leaders of the young state.

To be sure, the carrying out of such aims does not depend on the will of the Israelis alone, but to a large extent on the oil companies themselves. But there is every reason to believe that their interest and their willingness to operate in Israel and to cooperate with the Israelis depend in turn only on what they can expect in the way of security, friendship, political stability, and favorable working conditions. The Israelis, if they

want to, can offer the oil companies more in this respect than can any of the Arab countries. And while it is true that Israel's unwillingness to cooperate with the oil companies might not be fatal to either party, the advantages of such cooperation to both, once the whole problem were objectively considered, would be seen to be of such magnitude as to make continuation of their mutual animosity absurd.

However, while theoretically the motives for an early rapprochement between Israel and the oil companies are present, for the time being almost everything in the way of a practical approach to its realization is lacking. Israeli spokesmen continue to announce they can do without the oil companies and the oil companies continue to pretend that Israel is not very important to them either. But both parties would be better off were representatives of each sitting together at a round table and discussing their problems.

AT FIRST glance, compared with Iraq, Iran, and Saudi Arabia, Israel would appear to be of only minor significance as an oil-bearing region. Looking at her, however, through the eyes of the British and American oil companies, one can see that the linking of the oil-producing centers further to the East with the Mediterranean coast by pipelines would obviate the slow and expensive tanker route around the Arabian Peninsula through the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. The less than one hundred miles of Palestine's coastline between Acre in the north and Gaza in the south is the most valuable and suitable strip on the entire Eastern Mediterranean for pipeline terminals, refineries, and oil docks. Economically, therefore, Israel would seem predestined to become one of the world's foremost oil-handling centers, a place where the huge quantities of crude oil flowing from the Persian Gulf and Iraq fields could be most advantageously refined and shipped to Europe.

To give an idea of the magnitude of Middle Eastern oil reserves, it should be mentioned that the already-proven reserves are believed to exceed those of the entire

Western Hemisphere. Actual production of oil in the Middle East has trebled during the past ten years and now reaches one million barrels daily, a figure that is expected to be doubled within the next few years when several large pipeline projects for the movement of oil from Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, and Kuwait to the Mediterranean will have been completed.

A brief survey of what actual oil development has so far taken place in Palestine itself will give an indication of her present and future potentialities as an oil center:

1. The Iraq Petroleum Company (owned jointly by British, American, French, and Dutch interests) has laid 620 miles of pipeline from Kirkuk in Iraq to Haifa. This pipeline has a capacity of ninety thousand barrels of crude oil daily.

2. The I.P.C. has constructed oil storage tanks, oil docks, submarine loading lines, and other terminal installations at Haifa.

3. The I.P.C. and the British government-controlled Anglo-Iranian Oil Company have built an oil refinery at Haifa that can handle daily ninety thousand barrels.

4. The I.P.C., through its subsidiary, Petroleum Development (Palestine) Ltd., has started drilling operations at Huleiqat in the Negev eight miles northeast of Gaza. These operations were suspended, however, last February at a depth of 3,450 feet without a significant flow of crude oil having been obtained.

5. The I.P.C. has surveyed the Kurnub area in the Negev, 47 miles southeast of Gaza, and has completed preliminary work for the beginning of drilling operations there.

All these ventures in Palestine have been carried out mainly by the British personnel of the I.P.C., with predominantly Arab laborers and only a small staff of Jews. The I.P.C.'s operations show that Palestine is not only considered a potential and actual oil-handling center, but is also believed to have possibilities as an oil-producing area because of petroleum deposits, so far unexplored, in the Negev.

The I.P.C.'s plans for the immediate future, as far as Palestine is concerned, include:

the operation of a second pipeline from Kirkuk to Haifa—a line that is now completed except for its last forty miles, which run mainly through Israeli territory; extensions of Haifa's storage and dock facilities; and the sinking of the first Kurnub well. All this work was suspended just before Britain resigned her mandate and withdrew from Palestine.

But since the end of World War II Britain has no longer been the only power interested in Palestine's oil future. Another giant has appeared on the scene to stake the Western Hemisphere's first claim to oil rights in Palestine: the Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco), which sought and obtained from the former British administration in Palestine the right to bring its "Big Inch" (thirty-one inches in diameter) Arabian pipeline from the Persian Gulf across Palestine to the Mediterranean. (This line alone will carry five hundred thousand barrels of oil daily from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean.) This concession provides also for the establishment of refineries, docks, and auxiliary works on the Palestinian coast. However, the Palestinian part of this plan was shelved because of the "unstable political conditions in the country." Aramco, incidentally, has obtained additional rights of way to the Mediterranean coast through Transjordan, Syria, and the Lebanon for its Trans-Arabian Pipeline (Tapline).

WHAT will the Arabs do about the concessions granted to British and American firms in their respective territories? What will the concession-holders themselves do in the face of Arab hostility toward Israel? How will Israel react to the choice between becoming a major factor or a hostile bystander in the future oil development of the Middle East?

Let us deal with the Arab attitude first. The Arab rulers of territories holding thirty or more billion barrels of crude oil have naturally a good bargaining position vis-à-vis the Western powers. But it should not be overlooked that the oil deposits themselves are practically the only economic resource of

these Arab states, and that the latter realize very well that without American and British initiative, skill, and capital this wealth can never materialize. (The Arab states' income from oil royalties alone, at present production levels, will exceed seventy-five million dollars during 1948.) To be sure, Soviet interests also keep an eye on these territories, but the Arabs are as eager as the Anglo-Americans to keep them out; this was demonstrated in Iran two years ago when the Soviets had to retreat from Azerbaijan. Therefore, Arab threats to cancel the oil concessions granted to British and American oil interests have never been taken very seriously by competent observers, though it must be admitted that these threats have had some effect on British and, to a lesser extent, American policy.

The chief concern of the concession-holders themselves is to safeguard their interests against Soviet designs and—since the existence of Israel has become a definite and unchangeable fact—to reconcile the Arab world to this fact. With British and American interests in the Middle East running practically parallel, if not becoming identical, their policies, which at times seemed to clash on questions affecting Palestine, have lately become more coordinated. Yet as long as no peace settlement between the Arabs and Israelis is reached, the fact remains that many oil development schemes now in the planning or in an advanced stage cannot be pursued effectively.

The stoppage of the oil flow through the Kirkuk-Haifa pipeline with the consequent closing of the Haifa refineries and the resulting loss of ninety thousand barrels of oil daily has already been very costly to Britain and America. Similarly, the suspension of I.P.C. pipeline construction forty miles east of Haifa and the uncertainty hanging over the future of the Aramco Tapline and other pipeline schemes all show that an early settlement of the Israeli-Arab conflict is of great urgency to both Britain and America. And in any event the Western powers realize that prolonged unrest in the Middle East would play into the hands of the Russians.

WHILE the interests and attitudes of the Arab rulers and of the British and American concession-holders are, as we see, rather definite and unambiguous, Israel's position still remains undefined. It should become more defined, however, once her territorial boundaries are settled. The main questions that remain here are whether Israel will retain the Negev and whether Haifa will become internationalized.

Much of the role Israel plays in the future oil scene in the Middle East will depend on the outcome of the political tug-of-war over the Negev. Israel's claim to that area by right of the UN partition recommendation of November 29, 1947, by right of the development and settlement work she has carried out there, and by the fact of her physical presence in the region is contested by the British and Americans, who wish to incorporate the Negev in Abdullah's Kingdom of Transjordan. The determination of the Western powers to deny the Negev to the Jews is based on Britain's desire to retain a foothold (through her treaty with Abdullah) in an area of great military importance almost indispensable to British Empire strategy.

The annexation of the Negev to Transjordan would give Abdullah his long coveted access to the Mediterranean; to Aramco the most convenient outlet for its Tapline, which could then run under British protection through Arab territory to Gaza; and it would place the I.P.C.'s Kurnub fields inside territory Britain would dominate through her treaty with Abdullah. In view of these interested motives on the part of Britain, America, and Transjordan—motives they are willing to pursue not only by diplomatic means but also in the UN—Israel's chances for retention of the Negev, or at least of its oil-important areas, appear rather slim at the moment. But, of course, it remains to be seen whether the *fait accompli* of actual physical possession will not override the decisions of councils and diplomats.

The internationalization of Haifa is likewise designed to satisfy the interests of the oil companies, but here the chances for Israel's retention of sovereign control are

much better owing to her firmly settled and dominating position in the entire area.

IT is obvious that the British and American oil interests in the Middle East take Israel's hostility for granted and therefore bring the utmost pressure to bear to keep her authority out of areas important to the production and transportation of oil. But it must also be obvious that if Israel, by overcoming her own doctrinaire attitude on the question of oil, could dispel the fears of the oil interests, she would automatically lessen the resistance to her territorial claims in the Negev. This being the case, it becomes an urgent matter that she re-examine the assumptions upon which her attitude toward the oil interests is based.

The only way to reach an understanding on oil would be for representatives of the new state to sit down at the same table with those of the oil companies and try to acquaint each other with their respective opinions and plans and thereby remove their mutual suspicions and prejudices. Direct contacts should be established immediately between the Israeli government and the oil companies. At the same time sound public-relations activities could do much to change public opinion in Israel toward the oil enterprises in the Middle East, so that these would no longer be instinctively regarded as sinister and hostile, but considered a legitimate and desirable business until proven otherwise.

Oil company officials in Arab countries, on the other hand, could do much to improve Arab-Israeli relations; and there would be many other ways in which to foster good will and cooperation once both parties had decided to replace sentiment with reason. Instead of pointing up differences and placing obstacles in each other's path, all parties concerned would have to emphasize their common interest in developing the oil resources of the Middle East for the benefit of the peoples living there as well as for British and American investors and Arab potentates. And this would ultimately benefit the peoples of Europe and America, who need oil as much as the Middle East and Israel need peace.

SUMMON THE SERPENTS

HAYIM NAHMAN BIALIK

SUMMON the serpents to carry your wrath to the ends of the earth.

For behold you are cast to the wilderness, yoked to the arid rock,
Eternal bareness surrounding you and the dumb curse of the Lord,
Parted from the earth, forgotten the smell of your mother's breast,
Forgotten the look of the grass, and how it smells after rain,
And the raw power of the everlasting forests,
And the shouting in the river mouths,
And the shade of the vital tree, sappy and fresh forever.
Then, when the crumbs of your spirit fail, the last of the cornucopia
—Then shall you feed on gravel, and lick the flint in your thirst,
Your prayer—a basilisk hiss, your hope—wide desolation.
Then shall your eye tire of the naked shame of heaven and earth,
Where there shall be nothing to enliven heart and eye,
The hand of the Lord too wrathful and his eye too strait
For a small cloud to stray and the tail of a wind to wave
—And your lives shall wither in terror in the total sere,
And you shall ask to die, and scream in your agony.

Summon the eagles to bear your cry to the heart of the heavens.

For behold your wilderness has been visited,
Visited by clouds and visited by rain,
From the ends of the earth came messengers of rebirth,
A flock of clouds to quench their thirst who waited for them,
The thunder asleep in their laps, and lightning skipping before them.
To slither among the crowns of the rocks
And leap on the teeth of the cliffs
—And the clouds reached your place, and the lightning flashed in your eyes,
And the thunder was aroused and raged, and suddenly split your sky,
And the wilderness quivered and shuddered and the cliff started underneath you.
Then you rose, dumbfounded, fearful,
Struck with blindness and amazement,
Thrown from light into darkness, and plunged in both at once,
And spread your palms to the clouds, and your eyes called for torrents.
—But the blessed clouds returned whence they came,
Leaving their laughter's rumble to you
And their rain to the land.
So you stand, forsaken and sore,
With the thorns of the wilderness and its stones,
The last prayer withering like a twisted curse on your lips,
And you ask to die, and pine in the torment of your life—

Summon the clouds to bear your anguish to the wide seas.

HAYIM NAHMAN BIALIK (1873-1934) is recognized as one of the greatest of modern Hebrew poets. "Summon the Serpents," written in 1906, belongs with a series known as "Poems of Wrath," which grew out of Bialik's reaction to the Kishinev pogrom of 1903. The translation is by Jacob Sloan.

BLOOD OF REUNION

A Story

IRVING WEISS

MY father and mother, my aunt and grandfather made up our household, with me at the bottom and all of us under the wing of my grandmother. Although everyone attended to some household duties and you couldn't say that my mother didn't cook the three daily meals, it was my grandmother who had the final say on everything down to the last shake of pepper. She was up at five and it was she who fed my dog Terry, a black mongrel whom she just about tolerated. She went to bed at ten and after that time in our house nothing much happened anyway. My father and my aunt worked away from home all day. My grandfather puttered on projects around the house. As my grandmother's husband, he had a nervous habit of hitching up his pants all the time because, unlike her, he never knew what he was supposed to be doing. With all of us there or not, by her presence alone she ran things.

My grandmother had the face of a chieftain but when she smiled you felt it was only her way of looking at the light. When she sewed in the parlor or peeled or stirred things in the kitchen her eyes narrowed down like an artisan's and even after she relaxed, however seldom that was, the pride of having worked thoroughly still remained in them. Her type in the family had not passed to the in-between generation or to my own; I realized this very early and attached myself to her as a great one in our midst. My mother or whatever aunt some-

times lived with us had striven against her from time to time but she held out supreme.

When she first began to act unlike herself, everyone felt relieved that now each could move into one of the many vacant positions she left and together they could now take care of her in the way they thought right for an old woman. But as for myself, the only real child in the household, not having any interest in that matter, I clung to her more tightly than when I was under her once alert eyes. It must have been my own childishness, too, that endeared me to her as she settled down into this dotage, when the rest of the family gritted their teeth and bore with her bravely. I remember how her infirmity mellowed and quieted me and how I tried to care for her in my own way, partly out of revenge upon the adults around me—she was the weak spot in their armor.

"Sonny, bring Grandma in her milk. Don't let her go in the kitchen," my aunt would say; the refrigerator had been painted that afternoon. I felt important, of course. Only after my grandmother died did it dawn on me that she and I were classed together, with me the responsible one. But in those days I enjoyed the game, slackening my speed, keeping myself in check to please her by my playfulness without vexing her, and I took over responsibilities without anyone else ordering me to. And daily my grandmother seemed to grow more unpredictable.

THERE is a moment when you pass from youth to manhood at which you know that a change of status has taken place. At first there may be a few false indications of it, such as the lofty feeling in your heart after you've had a girl or perhaps the stupefied, superior feeling after

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you've broken away from home. But the one that carries most conviction and that may come later than either of the others is the sad feeling of no longer being accepted as the same person you were before. Then for an instant you may see yourself as someone between a child and an old man, too near to become friends with either.

There was a grizzled little tinsmith on the corner of Merton and Seventh streets I used to say hello to and chat with every day on my way to school. After I got my first job he once stopped me to ask if he could borrow a dollar. I knew for certain then that the change had taken place. He called me by my first name but I was more formal with him. That is, till then.

"What would you say to lending me a buck till next week?" he said.

I gave it to him and he paid me back the next day, and after a while I began to call him Pop and he'd use my nickname. I was no longer refreshing to him nor he a lucky godfather to me. He told me later that I'd been crowing so much about making money at my new job that he couldn't resist trying to borrow a dollar to make me really feel like a sport. Even that proved it for me.

So it's easier for me to see now what my grandmother and I found in each other. I could sit with her for an hour talking about every little thought that came into my head, about handball and my chemistry set, about the Kipling poems and summer vacation. She would listen with the sort of attention I usually had to beg from grown-ups, although she didn't ask me many questions. But she was still my grandmother; she tested all the doors and watered the plants as before. She was given her own way now as much as she exacted it before. There was no figuring out just how much she was willing to carry over from the past and to what extent she just wanted to rest. But now we enjoyed a kinship that had only been secret before.

Grandma and I could see more to tell each other about in a colored magazine picture than anyone else, even my aunt

who painted with oils. She would sit for long minutes looking at a page at a time although she couldn't read the captions, turning the magazine first one way, then another, smiling or frowning to herself.

"What are you looking at Grandma?" I would ask her in English and she might answer in her accommodating Yiddish, "*S'iz ein Boat, du sehest*," although as often as not she would call it so when it wasn't.

"But it isn't a boat, Grandma," I used to say at first. "It's a house. Can't you see?" But she could still overpower me with a look from beneath her brows, pitying me, so that I would begin to see the possibilities of such a house with a nice thrill of recognition. I remembered with pleasure my aunt telling me that when you paint a subject you must try to find all the possible colors that are bound up in it, find green even in a bright red, and I began to feel silly about opposing Grandma with stodgy objections.

I would point out pictures of flowers to her, and to make her feel good, comment on them as if I loved flowers, and in that way I could evoke her vitality almost to what it used to be. With the Sunday sections spread out on our laps I would be completely enraptured the whole morning even if the family thought me more of a child than my years were supposed to allow for. One day I was startled when my grandmother, gazing intently at a photograph in the paper of a young bride with long hair, suddenly made as if to stroke it. Then for the first time I wanted to cry and protect her but I let the impulse die down in me because I knew immediately what a hard time I'd have explaining my tears if my mother caught me.

I CAME home from school one afternoon a week later; I was seven years old, it was spring, towards the end of the term and every day stood out clearly on the calendar in the hall. Terry ran out of the alley towards me with his three o'clock bark that annoyed the carriage-wheeling mothers so much, and as I gathered him

up I noticed that Grandma wasn't sitting, wrapped up to the chin and wearing her hat, on the bench outside the house where she usually took the late sun upon her never-closing lids—her accustomed place which not even the landlady would usurp. Inside, I found a note from my mother on the kitchen table next to the milk and cookies telling me to have my bite, do my homework, and keep an eye on Grandma. She was at the department stores and wouldn't be home until late, the note said, and Grandpa had gone to the doctor's.

Now that I was in the house and still no sign of Grandma anywhere I became angry. The afternoon was cool and sunny; I wanted to go out and play. I finished the cookies with big bites and walked slowly through the rooms, a glass of milk in hand. I called her throughout the entire house, looked in the back yard—no Grandma. Outside I was ashamed to call so I just searched carefully in every direction and I even made a game of it by getting my field glasses and looking with them much more carefully than was necessary. Now I made a wry face and stamped my foot for mixed reasons. I wasn't very worried about her; I imagined she might have gone for a walk around the block, although I never remembered her going anywhere at that time except in a straight line up and down the street our house was on.

I gave up and went after her, first around the block, then in ever widening circles, hurrying if I was on the avenue, taking my time on side streets where I cracked hedge leaves idly between my palms. After a few corners turned irregularly I found myself near the El station where the third store away was the fruit man's. He was standing outside in his stained apron looking my way before I had a chance to detect his figure myself.

"Tell your mother," he said, "that the old lady bought a head of lettuce and a bunch of celery from me. Your grandma."

I guessed that he meant Grandma hadn't paid him. Most likely she had no money in her purse, since my mother had stopped

her from shopping months ago. She hadn't exactly stopped her, she just didn't remind her about it, and Grandma seemed to have forgotten the whole routine, especially after the food and groceries began to be brought in by a delivery boy.

"Please where is she now, Mr. Lipstein?" I asked anxiously. "You shouldn't have let her take them."

"What am I gonna do, refuse it?"

He took me by the shoulder. "She went that way," he said, pointing towards the El station.

As soon as I opened the outside door of the station I saw her carrying the package. She was trying to push her way past the turnstile nearest the change-booth. The man inside was explaining to her with a sarcastic show of patience while five or six passengers gathered around, a little removed, that she couldn't-go-through-without-putting-a-nickel-in-that-there-slot-there. I ran up to her afraid she wouldn't obey me now that she'd gone so far astray, and whispered, tugging at her sleeve, "Grandma come home." But I could see by her eyes that she didn't want to listen. Grandma didn't recognize me.

In Yiddish she kept saying to the man in the booth, "*Mensh*, let me in," with tones of the old voice that used to send me scurrying off.

"OH for Chris' sake you gotta put a nickel in lady to go through, Jesus!" he shouted at her.

"Leave her alone, she's my grandma," I shouted back at him but I was trembling. He sounded ready for violence. Grandma obviously didn't understand him—at least not speaking that kind of English. I tried to take her by the hand and just pull but she shook me off. The people standing around were wagging their heads and smiling out of the corners of their mouths as my grandfather sometimes did when he watched her from another room.

A SHORT, thin man, carrying a briefcase, who had just pushed through a nearby turnstile tapped my grandmother on the

arm and, kindly, as if she was a foreigner, said, "Nickel, five cents, there," pointing to the slot, but Grandma looked right through him. The man took out a nickel and put it in the slot for her.

"No, mister, don't," I cried out. "She has to come home with me." I had an idea. "Will you help me take her home, mister? We just live two and a half blocks away from here."

The group of passengers, now larger, buzzed with excitement but the man lowered his head to avoid any possibility of looking at me or acknowledging that he'd heard me and pivoted to tip his hat to Grandma and walk out.

"Why don't her people take care of her instead of letting her out like that?" remarked a fat lady to the person next to her who was holding a little boy by the hand. The child, younger than myself, said in a loud voice to his mother, his face turned flat upward to catch her eye, "It's Auntie Ardle, ma."

Go away, I thought, this is my grandma.

"Lady, if you don't have no money you can't go through," said the man coming out of his booth, wiping his hands off on a rag, "or else I'll call a cop." He was mad and red-faced. The whole incident went beyond just a minor delay for him now.

"Grandma, where are you going? Come back with me!" I nearly screamed, pleading, pulling her towards the wall. "Grandma you don't go in there—you come home with me."

"She's sick, she needs me," she finally murmured, in Yiddish, a little distracted, less intense.

"Who's sick, Grandma, who?"

"So sick, the old one," she repeated, but my quick question seemed to have startled her. She looked right at me but not so that the glint of my eyes lit up hers.

"*Meine mutter*," Grandma said in answer, but not to me.

"Grandma! You. . . ." my train of speech shunted into its only clear track, a desperate cry for my own mother. Grandma put down the bag of vegetables on the

turnstile and bent over to quiet me with a "Shah . . . shah, kindt, don't cry." This sudden attention to me engrossed her so completely that her features settled into their composure of the morning, of the days before, and seeing this through my tears I called to her in Yiddish, which I hardly spoke, wheedling as my mother would do, "Mamela, Ma . . . come, come, come home with me."

GRANDMA closed a large hand over mine and sweeping up the bag expertly with the other led me outside.

"What are you doing here?" she asked me. I was shocked and delighted. I just kept repeating for her to come back and as we stopped in the passageway I turned for both of us to head home. Soon she needed no prodding but I made up my mind to keep her lightly distracted until we came in sure sight of the house so I asked her questions about what we saw, pointed out places to her, told her what I did yesterday, what I was going to do tomorrow.

"Ay, Mamela, Mamela, tsh. . . ." Grandma intoned.

Before I could stop myself, "Grandma, please," I said, "you haven't got any mother. You can't have any mother—you're my grandma."

"What kind of nonsense is that, child?" she asked curtly, looking down at me with that easy twist of the head grown-ups used for my height. I knew what she meant: that I was talking wildly, not that I was wrong.

"Grandma, fix your hat," I said. She was wearing her old hat and torn coat that she used for her afternoons, sitting on the bench outside. The family would be horrified to know that she had been seen in it so far from the house. The hat was stylish for an old woman's hat, set a little sidewise on her head, it gave her an irresponsible appearance and her gray hair was straying. She reached up to adjust the hat but only succeeded in shifting it around to a position just as awkward.

WHEN we neared the house I saw that her tenseness had now completely given over, and she was quick to sit down on the bench. Side by side, relaxed, our hands in our laps, we let the last threads of excitement unwind. Grandma told me to pick up my foot so that she could tie my shoelace. Terry began to yap at us from the doorway, his nose pressed against the screen, and Grandma made little woofing sounds in mimicry which spurred him on until she yelled "Shah!" and we both looked at each other and laughed. I felt weak with relief.

I told Grandma to sit still while I went into the house to bring us a magazine. I wanted to see if I could stir up some interest in our favorite pastime, to keep my fears down and her interests from wandering until my mother returned. Luckily my first choice was a meat advertisement showing a golden brown roast photographed so cleverly that the juices gleamed and its texture seemed to fool you. Grandma was overcome with authentic old-fashioned amazement; for my part I began to get hungry. From that we went on to a talcum powder ad picturing a naked baby with an enormous head. This didn't hold me as long. A few neighbors passed by and I said hello for both of us. Children were playing across the street bawling names at each other. Their voices distracted me from my own silent, energetic job of gazing and turning pages. Grandma looked up at the children.

"Aren't they silly," I said to her.

She curled the skirt of her coat around her, got up, and started to walk across the street without a word before I knew what she was doing.

"Grandma!" I put down the magazine. A few yards away by now, she didn't answer, so I followed carefully behind her, looking around vainly for my mother.

Grandma was across the street now near two little girls who were rattling on at each other. "Come home, darling," she said to one of them and called her by a name I'd never heard.

"Leave the little girl alone, Grandma," I called out.

"Come inside now, it's time to go in," said Grandma to the child, who looked up at her with fascination and fear and then suddenly surprised herself by crying.

Soon both little girls were crying, calling for their mothers, but Grandma had the one child by the hand so that she couldn't run away as her playmate had already started to. I was so confused that I simply walked back to the house to call up my friend's sister to come over and help me. But there was my mother coming home. I saw her more than a block distant with that trembling sense of recognition with which you see someone you love from far away, always afraid of being shocked into error.

But it was my mother, and it seemed as if nothing too terrible was ever destined to happen. I ran to her, my anxiety gone for joy, and began to pour out the whole story at once. Before I'd got far she spotted Grandma, handed me her bundles, and strode resolutely across the street towards her own wayward mother. Her eyes widened as I continued talking about the fruit man and the change-booth operator and they narrowed as we drew closer to my grandmother who was saying to the child, still holding her by the hand but not forcing her, "Come home and I'll give you something nice."

MY PART was done now. I hoped my own familiar late afternoon for running and jumping around would still be waiting for me. I turned aside, walked back to the house, and left the bundles on the kitchen table, running out again immediately without daring to look any way but ahead towards my friend Billy's house so that I could find him to play ball. Terry jumped up to follow me down the steps but I sent him back without pausing in my own trot away from the house. There wasn't much of the day left.

When I turned the corner Billy saw me first and called out. He was playing ball

against the next house front where the rounded-off steps gave more surface to hit a fly from.

"Boy what a time I had with my grandma!" I said.

"She's off her nut, isn't she, your grandma?" Billy didn't look up as he threw, crouching to catch the return at knee-level.

"Yeh, she's getting crazier every day," I said, knowing that those words were a strike-me-dead signal to God.

We played against each other and I felt happy and exhausted beating him. Every thought I'd had all afternoon faded far away as though it never belonged to me. It was a good game.

Then a car drove by so fast we turned to watch it skid around the corner and as soon as it got out of sight we heard the brakes grind and screech. The silence that followed pressed the noise deeper into our ears and then broke into fragments of a loud, excited, screaming of women and children around the corner. Billy and I stopped to turn our heads. His arm went down to his side from mid-air, the ball in his hand, and we both whooped. An accident. A boy ran around the corner on the other side of the street. We followed with speed and enthusiasm, racing each other, in the direction of my house. A crowd had collected in the road in front . . . of my house. There was a dog in the road, and no car anywhere.

Now I ran faster, my heart pounding, feeling sick. There were my mother and grandmother coming out of the house in a hurry, my mother undoing her apron which she threw on the bench as she passed it, without stopping a second. I

pushed my way into the crowd and as soon as I saw it was my dog, I sobbed and bit my lip and ran to my mother. Terry's coat was gleaming with blood, his neck was twisted, his lips parted, his teeth bared. With my mother standing above me, holding me by the shoulder, I knelt down to touch him but was afraid to, he was so wet and so terribly dead. So that's what he is, I thought—dead.

"Don't touch him, darling, it's all right," said my mother, "I'll get a shovel and carry him back of the house."

The crowd began to disperse as soon as all the women and old men identified us as the owners of the dog, and mother and I returned inside where we sat down in the kitchen. She was trying to calm me but her own face showed strained and pale. I began to cry uncontrollably, my elbows on the table, holding my head.

We saw someone move in the hallway—it was Billy who had followed us inside and was standing in the shadows against the wall, forlorn, not knowing what to do or say. He turned towards the door.

"I'll open it," he murmured, his voice quavering, and for the first time mother and I heard someone rattling the screen door. Billy made a low cry: coming through the doorway was my grandmother—in the excitement we had forgotten her outside. She was carrying Terry in her arms like a baby, her fingers half hidden in sticky wads of his hair, dripping blood on the floor as she seemed to stalk into the kitchen, that lifeless gift and burden held before her with magisterial tenderness.

"No!" my mother screamed. But I broke away from her to rush over to my grandma, the tears drying on my face.

FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

GREENWICH VILLAGE: DECLINE AND FALL

Bohemia's Age of Lead

MILTON KLONSKY

Rabbi Joseph ben Shalom of Barcelona maintains that in every change of form, in every transformation of reality, or every time the status of a thing is altered the abyss of Nothingness is crossed. . . . Nothing can change without coming into contact with this region of pure absolute Being which the mystics call Nothing. . . . It is the abyss which becomes visible in the gaps of existence.

—Gershom Scholem

ONCE last summer I was crossing north on Sheridan Square, thinking of nothing; suddenly the green light turned red, and there, dodging in the middle of traffic with me, I caught sight of a man whose face was so blotched, pitted, and scabbed by disease that, modestly (having been ravished before by so many obscene stares), he cast his eyes down with the re-

SINCE the early years of this century, Greenwich Village in New York has been a mecca—not quite a refuge—for those who for one reason or another have chosen to live on the periphery (sometimes, but not always, the forefront) of American culture. But even the Village could not hope to escape history, and the tides of depression and war have left their marks on the sea-coast of Bohemia as elsewhere. MILTON KLONSKY, who here reviews the past decades of Village life, up to what appears to be its present dead-end, was born in New York in 1921, and attended Brooklyn College and Columbia University. His article “The Poetry of Samuel Greenberg” appeared in the October COMMENTARY.

finer coquetry of a beautiful woman. Where did he come from? And what was he doing out there in the broil of midday?—this phantom escaped from the undermind! When I reached the curb, I looked for him up and down the seven streets that radiate from the hub of the Square. But he had already disappeared, leaving behind him only a sulphurous after-image which, even now, still burns and holds its shape. What a scream, I mean what a laugh if this image of mine were his only claim to being—yet I choose to regard him with a straight face.

Now in the rational light uptown, above 14th Street, which is cut off from the Village like the Ego from the Id, I would have seen him for what he was. “There is the world dimensional,” as Hart Crane called it, “for those untwisted by the love of things irreconcilable.” But downtown, everything obvious is immediately suspect; and, obviously, the most hidden secrets are dressed in the loudest fashion, if you know what I mean. Even the streets of Greenwich Village have so many twists, dead stops, gaps, trailing ends, and sudden inspirations out of blank walls that it sometimes takes years of free association to find your way around.

There is no straight way. Nobody wants to be tagged—you’re it! Intellectuals without glasses, poets in business suits, gynanders and androgynes, the shapes and figures blur and metamorphose like the images of a dream. *Come out from behind that beard! Ovid, old Roman spy, you haven’t changed, who do you think I think you are—Sigmund Freud?*

WHERE was I? I was standing on Sheridan Square one night waiting for the electric horse on Jack Delaney's marquee to jump over the neon stile. But just as the lights turned, I saw, out of the corner of my eye, a drunk walk on his hind legs like a dog, stagger, fall on all fours, and heave up on the street. One of the Bleeker Street Goths who hang around this neighborhood pushed him from behind with his foot so that he slumped face down in his own stew. When he tried to jack himself up on his elbows, he was shoved down again, even harder than before. Standing there, I identified myself so closely with the poor croak that it was almost as though I had been kicked, and I who was sprawled out on the street with my head in vomit. But I knew it would be dangerous to interfere, so I swallowed my disgust and walked diagonally away across the Square.

Wherever you go you run into these young toughs, the "internal proletariat" of the Village, each one of them with a little fuse of violence smoldering under his shirt. They issue every night from the ranges of ulcerous tenements along Bleeker, Christopher, Macdougall, Sullivan, etc., in order to escape from the squalor of immigrant family life in crowded cold-water flats. Since the "nice" girls of the neighborhood are called in by their parents before the long Village night is even half over, they are forced to gather on the corners by themselves in male packs. Then to see Othello walking hand in hand with Desdemona, or the lay sodalities of fairies (a caricature of themselves), makes them ache with jealousy. They even grudge the sexual freedom of the Village artists and intellectuals who, like themselves, are barred from the commercial mills uptown. But here at least the artist and the conscientious objector to American culture have some sort of status. The Goths have none. Therefore, the drunk must eat his vomit.

Sometimes I'd come across them pitching coins against the wall of the Christopher Street poolroom and then, while the next pitch was held up until I passed, they'd look me over. *Was I a Jew? How did I do? Did I show any fear? What was I doing here?* Their philosophy is as hard as the cement under their feet. Everything is a racket; the game of life is to beat the

racket; and anyone who says no is a liar or a sucker. Their true heroes are the bookies, the prize-fighters, and the racketeers who once rose out of their own ranks and now operate the Nite Clubs and park their Cadillacs in front of the poolroom. One question they can never figure out, and so what never fails to impress them, is this: why anyone with a chance to play for the blue chips uptown, or why any girl born with a privileged face, should choose to live in these slums? And every year they see new recruits coming down.

THE Village attracts its own from every state of the mind: some for the faded romance of *La Vie Bohème*; some to be free of their parents; some out of acedia or wan-hope; some to trade in free love; some for art's sake; some because they are zebras on the white plains; some to hide from their failure; some because they'd rather be in Paris; some to do something about *it*; some for a change of mind or heart—but almost all to escape from the stunning heat and light and noise of the cultural mill grinding out the mass values of a commercial civilization.

But not all who live in the Village are at home there. There are also writers, private secretaries, dancers, copy writers, actors, illustrators, and musicians on the make, who come down from the provinces to be close to the Big Time and leave as soon as they can. Graduates of the toney Eastern colleges for women such as Vassar, Bennington, Bryn Mawr, and the rest comprise one of the steadiest sources of recruits. But after a brief flurry of excitement and uplift, these also dry up fast like summer rain. And then there are the fellow-travelers of Bohemia, whose home base may be anywhere at all, but who keep up with the Village line through the auspices of friends. Not to mention an etceterogeneous muster of characters for whom any classification would be inherently contradictory.

The places where all these people live range from the plush and marble apartment hotels on the Gold Coast of lower Fifth Avenue to the cold-water tenements with communal toilets and no baths that once housed the masses of immigrant workers at the beginning of the century. Here and there a few of the old type of one-family

brick houses still stand, relics of the Henry James and Lillian Russell era when Washington Square and its environs was the hub of New York society. Most of these have been split into two- or three-room flats, each one inhabited by its own colony of extraordinarily sensitive roaches with long, delicate, trembling wands and Hamlet-like refinements of indecision, a breed peculiar to the Village. The interiors are furnished in a style which, through the years, has become almost as standardized as Bronx Department Store Gothic or Terre Haute monde moderne: chairs and tables and couches wavering between junk and the antique like the houses themselves; framed reproductions of Rouault's "The Old King" or Picasso's "Woman in White" or that picture by Henri Rousseau of a lion in the moonlight sniffing the feet of a sleeping gypsy; floors painted red, yellow, green, brown; collapsible shelves loaded with books on psychiatry, books of modern poetry, books of prints by the Paris school, some second-hand or inherited, but most of them borrowed and never returned; and so on. With only minor changes, it is recognizable as the period style formed at the end of the First World War—the time Greenwich Village first became self-conscious—and reflects all the nostalgia for those good old days.

AS SEEN from the fox-hole perspective of the Village during the 20's, America was a No Man's Land, the haunt of the Cyclops. Only in Europe could the good life be found:

*Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,
Luxe, Calme, et Volupté.*

The boulevards of Paris were as crowded with Villagers as Washington Square in the Spring.

By the 30's, the spiritual homeland had shifted a thousand miles to the East amid the gilded domes and cupolas of the first Workers' State. (It was at this time, incidentally, that young Jewish intellectuals from the outlying boroughs of New York entered the Village as a group.) The depression fell like an incessant damp, cold and miserable and everywhere. What remained of the enthusiasms of the 20's was sublimated into political passion: Dionysius was reborn as Nicolai Lenin. And, con-

versely, the café and speakeasy society of those days was transformed into cafeteria society—Life Cafeteria, Stewart's, the Waldorf—where, until far in the night, the history and destiny of mankind was measured out with coffee spoons. To the Bleecker Street Klans on the other side, who sat in the steam of tobacco smoke and watched these tables seethe and boil with Marxist pronunciamientos, appeals, denunciations, charges, and countercharges, all this talk and all this fervor were just so much sucker bait.

Still, in those first years the marriage of bohemian freemasonry and the camaraderie of the WPA was almost perfect. The open collar and the grimy pants served both as well. But afterwards the foundations of this union split so wide (corresponding to the political divorce in the Workers' State itself) that, when the bastard Stalinist type appeared with his slogans, his cast-iron frame of mind, his dog faith, and his carefully cultivated mediocrity, it was a shock to recall his parentage. And the radical splinter groups that followed with their perpetual cries of "Rape!" and their tedious apocalypses—what could be expected from them?

By the end of the 30's Lenin's mummy had begun to stink.

NOT the Revolution, but the Great War itself—that was the apocalypse so much dreaded and so long anticipated it was almost a relief when it came. Greetings! "Bababadalgharaghtakamminarronnkonnbronnntonnerronnntuonnthunntrovarrhounawnskawntoohooohoordenthurnuk," as James Joyce said. But ah, those days of innocence! O lost Arcadia! I never saw so many drooping fawns and dying swans. The war put a stop to all that. And nothing could ever be the same any more.

While the war was going on, every night in the Village was Saturday night. Soldiers and sailors of all the Allied armies jammed the bars and the main streets of Greenwich Village hunting for a wild time. But that time was gone. With the moral dikes broken everywhere, and the whole country engulfed by the flood, the Village, strangely enough, was left high and dry. All the tabooed "dirty" words had been rubbed clean by everyday use. Of course there was as much freedom

in the Village as before; but since this was equalled and even surpassed by Main Street, where was the defiance and the revolt against convention which, previously, had been the spur? The celebrated Village campaign for sexual independence had ended in a strange victory: free love was driving the professionals off the streets. And the baby-faced V-girls walking arm in arm with sailors down Broadway were wearing their mothers' high heels. In this situation, only the operators of the honky-tonks on Sheridan Square and in the side alleys made sure, somehow, that the sinister reputation of Greenwich Village was preserved.

The good old days when nobody had a job and nobody cared were over. Even the panhandlers who wander down to the Village from the "smoke" joints on the Bowery would touch artists and intellectuals on the street who were never good for a nickel before. And now that there was so much money around, apocryphal stories of the Depression were revived with nostalgia: how this musician had split his personality and collected four pay checks from the WPA music project as a string quartet; how someone else had lived off the Waldorf Cafeteria for a year by demanding a free cup of hot water for a second cup of tea without buying the first, and then, by pouring in enough ketchup, had brewed a thick bowl of tomato soup on his table, etc., etc. But for the majority of Villagers, rejected by the Army on psychoneurotic grounds, the slush money to be had uptown was irresistible; and, without too much loss of face, some erstwhile bohemians were even able to join the great herd shoving at the trough. This was not altogether a betrayal of principle. It was, I think, a means for absolving the secret guilt of not being in uniform. For them the despair within had at last been equalled by the hysteria without, thus providing a precarious common ground for a *modus vivendi*. But a return later on to the past life was almost impossible, as most had, in the meantime, contracted a new apartment, an analyst, a wife, or other expensive habits.

Perfect circles of friends drifted apart and disappeared like smoke rings. And one by one the old hangouts were lost. George's Bar (the ancestor of the San Remo today) was taken over completely by sailors and

their quail; and even the last remaining forum of cafeteria society, the Waldorf, fell to the Bleecker Street Goths, who now had it almost completely terrorized. Boredom followed everywhere you went: boredom, bar-room hysteria, confessions regretted by morning, cracked marriages, affairs over in a week, violence for reasons forgotten during the violence. . . . Then the war suddenly ended.

AFTER the block parties and the parades under the Arch, it was wry to see the new recruits to the Village come down expecting to find the Golden Age of the 20's or the Silver Age of the 30's, but hardly prepared for this, the Age of Lead. Morale was worse than in the army. It was impossible to rent an apartment without "pull" or a great deal of cash. Through their GI loans, some managed to open new book shops with a room in the back; and there you could see them sitting all day and part of the night surrounded by second-hand books and piles of old literary magazines—*Partisan Review*, *Kenyon*, *Sewanee*, *View*, etc.—chatting with friends and customers most of whom came to sell rather than to buy. A dull business, once the edge had worn off.

What they had dreamed while regimented in the army was a vision of the palmy days of Paris Bohemia with a slight admixture of the American Frontier—but by now, alas! the Left Bank had been eroded by sentiment, and the frontier had contracted to the five senses of the individual. The underground names and passwords of a generation ago were already shopworn, with the new ones kept under the counter. It was also harder to break into certain Village cliques by mere brilliant talk and the flash of personality alone. Somehow the crass slogan of American business—"How much does he make?"—had been taken over by the Village: "Where does he show?"—"What has he published?"—the bark of an official dog. Artists and poets did their "work" like everybody else.

During the war, Greenwich Village had been exposed as never before to the total glare of American mass culture, a light that had long blinded everyone with excess of light. Then, with the liberation of Paris, came the first influx in five years of the new

paintings by Picasso (with their cartoon shapes) as well as work by Braque, Bonnard, and young French painters such as Dubuffet; the poetry of Eluard and the cryptograms of Queneau; and, most astonishing, the Existentialist philosophy of Sartre and Camus, which drew heavily for its examples on the tough-guy heroes of American fiction and gangster movies. The anticipation was nothing compared to the let-down. And when European artists and writers again came to America, guided by their customary arrogance toward the natives, they were given a close look. They were like us—only smaller, fussier, dingier, and even (O Ghost of Henry James!) more innocent of the facts of life. Despite all their bitter experience, they had not yet been through the mill of a total commercial civilization—and that was the Real Distinguished and Distinguishing Thing. Their day and night were not ours.

Europe had already probed the nerve ends of modern art to the points of their most exquisite attenuations, from Mallarmé to Proust, from Redon to Mondrian. By seeking to re-barbarize their own culture through American jazz, movies, comic strips, etc., European artists and intellectuals had in the end redirected America up its own alley. (A final irony is that, even in this, America is still following the lead of Europe.) But now there was no turning back.

In the past, these debased forms of popular culture had been something to be poked with a long stick. Now that they had acquired such foreign respectability, their very coarseness was subtly admired. O Polyhymnia, sacred slut, sing for us (if you don't mind) of the furious drives of Dick Tracy, L'il Abner, and Moon Mullins struggling in their boxed and aimless worlds; and of the shadowy Olympus of Hollywood where the old forms of Greece are overthrown by a mechanical Prometheus; and of the soap dramas on the radio where the drabness and stupidity of life is celebrated, and the movements of the bowels are announced with trumpets. . . . Maybe the old alienation of artists and intellectuals in America could be adjusted by a common bondage. Maybe this was the way out at last. But even if this were true, the sad fact remains that a way out is not necessarily a way in, nor is "culture" a revolving door.

THE way of alienation is the Jew's badge of Greenwich Village, a way apart that orients itself by negation. Life here is the ghetto life, indrawn, with its own tastes and smells, rank and dark and protected as an arm-pit. The native loneliness of Americans is so intensified in the Village that, paradoxically, it becomes a social cement that holds it together. For what is feared even more than alienation from American life is self-alienation, the loss of identity in the melting pot, reduction to the lowest common denominator of dollar and cent values. It is from this fear that Greenwich Village protects its own. Under cover of the most ideal persuasions of self-denial, there is always a private need.

The radical movement of the 30's was engaged not only with politics but with more personal considerations: political parties were places where you met and made your friends. And the same function was served by the arty societies of the 20's. But times change—now's now and then was then.

Free and easy love in the Village is a thing of the past. The night wanderer from bar to bar searching for the rare encounter finds only wanderers like himself, always on the prowl, always restless, never satisfied. The more intellectual can spend hours sitting in the gas chambers of the New School, bored to extinction, but hoping to meet a true friend in such cultured atmosphere. The fairies are the most driven—their nervous cruises down 8th Street, 4th Street, the Park, and back again are like a man pacing up and down a room. And even when all these find what they want and still want it, the gossip spreads so fast and the Who's Had Who in the Village is so faithfully compiled—although nobody cared enough to snoop before—that a lasting relationship is rare.

If the most important single event in the erotic life of Man during the past century has been the gradual disappearance of animals from the cities and farms, then the next—although probably there is no connection—has been the emergence of Woman to the rank of full and equal partner. Women in the Village are often as aggressive as the men, who are inclined to be somewhat backward as a result. The illusion of emancipation, however, satisfies most. On the corner of Greenwich and 6th Avenues stands

the House of Detention, or jug, for women, which hides its grim interiors behind the facade of an apartment house—even numbered, 10 Greenwich Avenue: a demure symbol and monument of the suffrage movement. Like the men of Greenwich Village, women here suffer from the fact that love is not an immolation of the self, but the proof of it: *Copulo ergo sum*. And those causes and movements which once supplied additional proof are no longer viable.

WITHOUT any unifying political or artistic center, the Village has fragmented into small groups who go to the same parties, hold the same views, and know each other too well. The Society of Neurotics Undergoing Psychoanalysis is the only one at present with something of the old catholicity, yet with this important difference: it is a secret society, and the membership is hidden even from those who belong. Still, it's a connection. And it takes only a minute for those who are, or who have been, or will be analyzed to smell one another out. First, the shy query: Have you been analyzed? Then: How many years? And next: Who is he? How much does he charge? And then: What party?—Freudian, Reichian, Adlerian, Horneyan, Jungian? This last question is charged, and the wrong answer can explode any further conversation.

For when the political cliques of the 30's lost their passion and died, they never really died but rose to the bosom of the Father and were strangely transmogrified. Psychoanalysis is the new look, Sartor Resartus, but the body underneath is the same.

A competent analyst can read their minds like a book by Freud, which is what some of them become after two or three years on the couch. The desperation, however, is real. Looking into themselves, they've seen the Gorgon. It does no good to pat its ugly snout, or to feed it lump sugar. The monster sits deep inside covered by the muck of the undermind and with its eyes always open. In order to charm it to sleep, or to pierce its heart by a sharper insight, they lie on the psychoanalytic couch in a dark room with Perseus on his rocker behind them, his pen in hand, taking notes. *O why was I born with a different face? Why can't I find a lover? or a job? or a friend? Why don't people admire me? Why do I hate the*

sound of clocks? Why can't I dream? Why can't I get up in the morning? Why do I bite my toenails? Why don't you ever say anything? O tell me it's true and it's not true! Show me the open way! Make me feel that everything will be all right. So it goes on. Job, covered with boils and sitting on a stone in the field, asked the same questions.

There is a circle apart, however, even from the Village which is itself apart, where all the answers kiss the questions and all those who are afflicted with wanhope or acedia can make peace with themselves. I mean the jazz-narcotics coteries, the "hipsters," so-called. These are drawn from the spiritually dispossessed who form the underground of Village life. Since they are unalterably against The Law, they have their own rites and passwords and worship their own forbidden God—The One Who Puts Out The Light. The Hipster societies—if they are such, since nobody in them thinks they belong—may be considered the draft-dodgers of commercial civilization, just as Villagers, in general, are the loyal opposition or "conscientious objectors." They take no stand, for any stand would have to be inside the group and therefore against themselves, against their negative principle. The mood which infects them all is, perhaps, a tender American version of that underground nihilism which erupted in the forms of Dada and fascism in Europe—anti-art and anti-morality. What they believe in is benzedrine, "tea," and jazz.

Jazz and "tea" (marijuana) form a bridge to Harlem, the other ghetto uptown, and many on both sides use it to cross over. The midpoint is 52nd Street where all the cats, black and white, can get together in the cellar clubs to dig the latest jive and to hear Dizzie or the Bird or the Hawk blow their valves. Black jazz is the only art whose moods and ecstasies reflect their own, whose pace is equal to the terrible inner speed of the drug. When marijuana loses its drive there are some who learn how to saddle and ride the "horse" of heroin. But once on that nightmare, as everybody knows, there is no dismounting until the other side of the Bar has been crossed. For such release, life itself is a handicap.

Around the track of all these gyres and circles in Greenwich Village, no matter

where we start from we arrive at the same place in the end—beside the point. Without a common focus, images are fractured on everybody's point of view; and meanings shift without pivotal reference. The boundary between inner and outer reality is blurred. What is real or good or beautiful is a matter of taste. Since for our time, and in the Village especially, truth itself has become a sentiment, the search for an Absolute is maudlin. All the beards of authority have been cut off, and anything goes: Ovid is Freud is Karl Marx is Joe Gould is I AM. Which brings us by a commodius vicus of recirculation back to Sheridan Square and environs, like a barber's pole forever disappearing into itself.

I cut diagonally away across the Square, leaving the drunk on the sidewalk, and headed for the cover of darkness in the movies. The theater was packed, people were standing five deep behind ropes, yet, somehow, probably because I was alone, the usher signaled for me to follow as soon as I arrived. While we were walking down the aisle, a sudden blow of laughter from the audience struck me so hard that, even without knowing why, I laughed along with the rest.

My seat was in the middle row, the best in the house, and, what was even more uncanny, two others right next to it were vacant! I smelled them, I looked under them, I felt them—nothing was wrong. But why wasn't anyone coming down the aisle? There was another blow of laughter, and then another even harder, the effect augmented by itself. I looked up at the screen. *A man was being hit over the head by a lead pipe.* Although he seemed in agony, every time he screwed his eyes and made mouths the laughter from the audience became loud-

er. A woman was whispering behind my back! I turned around, but quickly she looked the other way. ME? Now the whole house was screaming. *A blindfolded man was about to walk into an open sewer.* I shut my eyes, but his after-image remained. The beam of the inner eye cast his figure on my mind with as much power as the projector upon the movie screen. As I wavered, two women in gray and black came down the aisle. There was no other way out. I ran up the stage, and, while my shadow wavered on the screen for a moment as though undecided whether to follow, plunged into the abyss of nothing. The man tore the bandage from his eyes and clutched at me as I passed. But the film of reality which separated us was as wide as the abyss itself.

Down Fifth Avenue and under the Arch I ran to the cement circle in Washington Square. It was a bitter night without stars or a moon and the park was deserted. But from nowhere someone called "Klonsky!"—my name. I saw him then as he came loping towards me, his face so flat and black I could hardly separate the features. "Give me some skin, man," he said, "I want you to dig some of this new charge."

Ah well, ah well, it was my friend Saggy, an old viper out of Harlem, always frantic, always high, the kind of tea-pusher who'd pull a hype on his own mother if he knew who she was. Under his sleeve his wrist was pocked with a thousand bites of the needle. He took out a long white fuse of tea from his pocket and bit open one end. Then he lit up with a deep sigh of smoke and, as the image of the burning match reflared upon his eyes, I saw in that sudden flash of insight that they were pitch-black! they had no whites!—like the sooty fire-place with the orange flame burning inside it before which I am writing.

CEDARS OF LEBANON

NOT MEANT FOR ANGELS

Some Midrashim

THERE is the written law—in Judaism it is the Bible—which is supposed to govern all of life: the rule and the exception, the common and the extraordinary, all times and places. It never does, of course, and to deal with life's stubborn complexities there arises the oral law, which "explains" the written law. Thus is novelty incorporated into tradition, with a subtle naivete that violates neither the traditional nor the novel. Eventually, the oral law becomes Talmudic and is written down in its turn, lest its wisdom vanish with the generations. And alongside of this, and often intertwined with it, there is tradition, preserved wisdom, although not law.

Talmudic Judaism trained sages who formulated the oral tradition, and their wisdom was in the course of time "published" in the form of cryptic accounts—as though taken down by an overworked stenographer—of the delibera-

tions and arguments on the law in the academies of Babylonia and Palestine, as well as in epigrams, brief remarks, pungent insights, parables, and other fragments of prose and poetry. These can be found in the non-legal parts of the Talmud—the *Haggadah* (or *Aggadah*)—and in the *midrashim*, originating in the first five centuries CE and flowering abundantly in the centuries that followed. In contemplating this wealth of material, one finds oneself witnessing a tradition in the very process of growth.

The following examples of Judaism's oral tradition are taken from *Hammer on the Rock*, an anthology selected and edited by Nahum N. Glatzer and translated from the Hebrew by Jacob Sloan, which is to be published this month by Schocken Books. These selections are printed here by permission of the publisher.—ED.

The Making of Man

And God said: Let us make man (Gen. 1:26).

RABBI Simon said:

When the Holy One, blessed be he, came to create the first man, the ministering angels divided into parties and factions, one saying: Let him not be created, and another saying: Let him be created.

Mercy saying: Let him be created, for he will be merciful,

and Truth saying: Let him not be created, for he will be all lies.

Righteousness saying: Let him be created, for he will do righteous deeds,

Peace saying: Let him not be created, for he is all contention.

What did the Holy One, blessed be he, do?

He took Truth and flung him to the earth.

The ministering angels said to the Holy One, blessed be he:

Master of the universe, do you disgrace your own seal?

Raise truth from the earth.

Rav Huna said:

While the ministering angels were still arguing and disputing,

the Holy One, blessed be he, created man.
Then He said to them:
Why do you argue? Man is already made.

Conception

RABBI Hanina bar Pappa expounded:
The name of the angel appointed over conception is Night.
He takes the seed and lays it before the Holy One, blessed be he,
and says to him:
Master of the universe, what is this seed to be—
mighty or weak, wise or foolish, rich or poor?
But he does not say "wicked or righteous."
So according to Rabbi Hanina. For Rabbi Hanina said:
All is in the hands of heaven, except the fear of heaven.

It Were Better

OUR masters have taught:
For two years and a half there was a difference between the school
of Shammai and the school of Hillel.
The one school said:
It were better for a man not to have been created than to have
been created.
And the other school said:
It were better for a man to have been created than not to have
been created.
They voted and concluded:
It were better for a man not to have been created than to have
been created;
now that he has been created, let him search his deeds.

Singularity

THEREFORE was man created single, to teach you
that whosoever wrecks any one soul in Israel
the Writ considers to have wrecked a complete world,
and whosoever sustains any one soul in Israel
the Writ considers to have sustained a complete world;
and he was created single to keep peace among the human creatures,
that no man might say to his fellow,
My father was greater than your father.
And to tell you the greatness of the Holy One, blessed be he:
For a man stamps many coins in one mold and they are all alike;
but the King who is king over all kings, the Holy One,
blessed be he, stamped every man in the mold of the first man,
yet not one of them resembles his fellow.
Therefore every one must say:
For me the world was created.

Beauty That Withers

RABBI Eliezer was sick. Rabbi Yohanan came to visit him.
He saw Rabbi Eliezer lying in a dark house.
Rabbi Yohanan bared his arm, and the room lit up.

He saw that Rabbi Eliezer was crying. He said to him:

Why are you crying?

Is it for the Torah in which you have not learned enough?

We have learned: Study more, study less, it matters not,
so long as one's heart is turned to heaven.

If because of the provisions you lack—

not every man merits two tables.

If because of the sons you have not—

see, this is the bone of my tenth son.

Rabbi Eliezer said to him:

I am crying over this beauty of yours, which is to wither in the dust.

He said to him:

You are right to cry over that.

And they wept together.

Greeting The Messiah

RABBAN Yohanan ben Zakkai used to say:

If there be a plant in your hand when they say to you:

Behold the Messiah!

—Go and plant the plant, and afterward go out to greet him.

Sharing

RABBI Yohanan said:

Every distress that Israel and the nations of the world share
is a distress indeed.

Every distress that is Israel's alone
is no distress.

Not Meant for Angels

RABBI Joshua ben Levi said:

When Moses ascended to heaven, the ministering angels said to the
Holy One, blessed be he: What is a man born of woman doing here?

He said to them: He has come to receive the Torah.

They said to Him: Is it the precious hidden treasure which first
you hid nine hundred and seventy-four generations before the
world was created that you seek to give to flesh and blood?

"What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? And the son of man,
that Thou thinkest of him?"

O Lord, our Lord, How glorious is Thy name in all the earth!

Whose majesty is rehearsed above the *heavens*" (Ps. 8:52).

The Holy One, blessed be he, said to Moses:

Reply to them

Moses said to Him:

Master of the universe, what is written in this Torah which you are
about to give me?

"I am the Lord thy God who brought thee out of the land of Egypt"
(Exod. 20:2).

Moses said to the angels:

Did *you* go down to Egypt? Were *you* enslaved to Pharaoh?

Then what is the Torah to you?

What else is written in it?

"Thou shalt have no other gods" (*ibid.* v. 3):
 Are *you* surrounded by nations that worship other gods?
 What else is written in it?
 "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (*ibid.* v. 8):
 Do *you* do any labor, that you need to rest?
 What else is written in it?
 "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain"
 (*ibid.* v. 7):
 Is there any commerce, any give and take among *you*?
 What else is written in it?
 "Honour thy father and thy mother" (*ibid.* v. 12):
 Do *you* have fathers and mothers?
 What else is written in it?
 "Thou shalt not murder. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
 Thou shalt not steal" (*ibid.* v. 13):
 Is there any jealousy in your midst? Is there any will to evil
 in *your* midst?
 At once they conceded to the Holy One, blessed be he.
 As it is written:
 "O Lord, our Lord, How glorious is Thy name in all the *earth*!"
 (Ps. 8:2).

The Journey

RABBI Yohanan wept when he came to this verse;
 "Behold, He putteth no trust in His saints" (Job 15:15).
 If He putteth no trust in His saints, in whom does he put trust?
 One day he was going on a journey and saw a man gathering figs.
 He was leaving those that were ripe, and taking those that were green.
 Rabbi Yohanan said to the man: Are not those better?
 The man said to him:
 I need them to take on a journey; these can keep, those cannot keep.
 Rabbi Yohanan said:
 This is why it is written: "Behold, He putteth no trust in His saints."

Witnesses

"AND YE are My witnesses, saith the Lord, and I am God"
 (Isa. 43:12).
 Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai taught:
 If ye are "my witnesses," I am the Lord,
 and if ye are not my witnesses,
 I am not, as it were, the Lord.

Sanctification

RAV PAPPA said to Abbayi:
 How was it that miracles happened to the early masters,
 and no miracles happen to us?
 Should you say, it is because of their learning;
 why in the days of Rav Judah all they studied was the
 Order of Damages,
 while we study all the six orders.

Yet, while Rav Judah was simply taking off one shoe before prayer,
the rains fell;
while we afflict our souls and cry out, and no one heeds us.
He said to him:
The early masters gave their souls for the sanctification of the
Name of God.
We are not giving our souls for the sanctification of the
Name of God.

Torah on Earth

ON THAT day Rabbi Eliezer brought all the proofs in the world,
and the masters would not accept them.
He said to them: If the law is according to me, let this locust tree
prove it.
The locust tree moved a hundred cubits. (And some say:
four hundred cubits.)
They said to him: The locust tree cannot prove anything.
Then he said to them: If the law is according to me,
let this stream of water prove it.
The stream of water turned and flowed backwards.
They said to him: The stream cannot prove anything.
Then he said to them: If the law is according to me,
let the walls of the House of Study prove it.
The walls of the House of Study began to topple.
Rabbi Joshua reprimanded them:
If scholars are disputing with one another about the law,
what business is it of yours?
They did not fall down out of respect for Rabbi Joshua, and did not
straighten up out of respect for Rabbi Eliezer, and they are
still inclined.
Then he said to them: If the law is according to me,
let the heaven prove it.
A voice came forth from heaven and said:
Why do you dispute with Rabbi Eliezer?
The law is according to him in every case.
Rabbi Joshua rose to his feet and said:
"It is not in heaven" (Deut. 30:12).
What is the meaning of: "It is not in heaven"?
Rabbi Jeremiah said:
The Torah has already been given once and for all from Mount Sinai;
we do not listen to voices from heaven.
For You have already written in the Torah on Mount Sinai:
"After the majority must one incline" (Exod. 23:2).
Rabbi Nathan came upon Elijah.
He said to him: What was the Holy One, blessed be he,
doing at that moment?
Elijah said to him:
He was smiling and saying: My children have defeated me,
my children have defeated me!

ON THE HORIZON

Schoenberg's New Cantata

KURT LIST

A SURVIVOR OF WARSAW, which Arnold Schoenberg completed about a year ago, is a cantata in a new form, telling the story of a Jew who escaped from the Warsaw ghetto. Even if Schoenberg were not the greatest composer of the century, the cantata's concern with the most traumatic experience of modern Jewry would suffice to earn it serious attention. In addition, the new work offers solutions of truly extraordinary value to some of the current problems of Jewish culture in this country that have been under intense discussion of late in the community.

A Survivor of Warsaw is written for a narrator, male chorus, and orchestra to a verbal text which the composer fashioned on the basis of reports from Jewish survivors

FOR its second appearance, this new department devoted to "occasional" and more or less informal comment on events and cultural developments offers: a report by KURT LIST on the latest work (not yet publicly performed) of Arnold Schoenberg, perhaps our greatest living composer, and regarded by many critics as the creator of a unique synthesis of the specifically Jewish in form and feeling with the most fruitful tendencies in modern music; and a sceptical note by IRVING KRISTOL on a recent attempt to translate anthropological findings into intergroup understanding via modern advertising techniques. Schoenberg's cantata will have its world premiere over the French radio on December 13, under the direction of René Leibowitz. Dr. List is a composer as well as a critic; the latest performance of his compositions, by the Manhattan Wind Quintet, took place in New York in March of this year. He is editor of the magazine *Listen* and an editor of Bomart Music Publications, publishers of many modern scores. Mr. Kristol is an assistant editor of COMMENTARY.

after the war. Its composition was begun in 1946, under the immediate impact of the revelations that made it impossible to disbelieve any longer the reality of Jewish extermination—a truth we knew intellectually even before then, but which we came to accept emotionally, if at all, only after repeated confirmation. The entire cantata was finished in August 1947 in *particell*—a sort of musical shorthand that only an experienced musician can easily decipher—but not in the final orthographic form from which a publisher's copy or parts for performances can be made. Since Schoenberg, because of failing eyesight, could not undertake the inditing of a publishable score, René Leibowitz, a young composer who had made a reputation for himself as a conductor and a theoretician of the Schoenberg school, finished the task in December 1947, and the result was certified by the composer.

THE text itself of *A Survivor of Warsaw* is far from an adequate indication of the emotions of the composer during its writing.

The narrator describes a day that led to the machine-gunning of thousands of Jews. They died singing the ancient prayer of *Shema Yisrael*—this prayer, sung by the chorus, concludes the composition. The narrator's words are in English, with which Schoenberg has only passing acquaintance, and they read like a translation of German Expressionist style of the 20's. It has always seemed strange that an artist of Schoenberg's genius, who has with every new work opened up wider musical vistas, should have had his literary tastes fixed in youth, in Symbolism first and then in Expressionism. What came off convincingly when handled by writers like Bert Brecht and Georg Kaiser back in the 20's sounds strange in his mouth; and, though an ex-

cellent essayist in German, he has mastered neither the art of narrative treatment nor the English language.

Attempts to create atmosphere with a single stroke of the pen result only in jagged, unrhythmical sentences. "The day began as usual. Revolt when it still was dark. Get out whether you slept or whether worries kept you awake the whole night: you had been separated from your children from your wife from your parents you don't know what happened to them how could you sleep?" The immense tragedy begins to sound stale and melodramatic. Even more inept is the treatment of the German *Feldwebel* who gives the orders for the execution in a clipped Prussian accent out of Hollywood: "*Achtung! Still gestanden! Na wird's bald? Oder soll ich mit dem Gewehrkolben nachhelfen? Na jutt, wenn Ihr's durchaus haben wollt!*" One is almost relieved—and not only for obvious dramatic reasons—when the chorus finally breaks into the words of the Hebrew prayer.

AND yet Schoenberg has nonetheless achieved a major masterpiece in *A Survivor of Warsaw*. He has been able to do this, despite his faulty text, because the histrionics of the work are unimportant, the emotions beneath them everything. As Schoenberg himself once put it in a different connection, "I write music as music without any reference other than to express my feelings in tone. I do not shape my scores with a definite idea to express anything but music. All symbolic ideas are read into it by musicologists, for I have no intention when I write of solving tonal problems, creating emotional response, or building unusual patterns. All I want to do is express my thoughts and get the most possible content in the least possible space." This Schoenberg has certainly done in the present cantata.

And though his intentions may have been limited to the expression of his thoughts, he has touched on problems that reach much further and, as in every great work of art, imply much more than his own particular feelings.

Thus the quality of Schoenberg's text is, I repeat, of relatively little consequence to the total quality of the work. Since, as the composer himself says, "There are relatively

few persons who are able to understand music, merely from the purely musical point of view," the audience must be warned not to let its attention be deflected from what the cantata accomplishes musically by what it does not accomplish literarily.

INTO a rhapsodic musical structure that appears loose at first glance, Schoenberg infuses an atmosphere of horror and fear by purely musical means. This is accomplished in the first place—and on the surface—by impressionistic orchestral devices. More than in any other of Schoenberg's works the instruments are here exploited for all their coloristic potentialities, with their individual techniques pushed to the limit by such devices as *tremolos* in the strings, *Flatterzunge* in the winds.

There is also a prodigious use of percussion instruments. Rhythmically, the atmosphere of horror is created by repetitive, almost obsessional, metric patterns of a kind that Schoenberg had not made use of since his *Five Orchestral Pieces*. (These were first performed in 1916 and Schoenberg himself said that their music "seeks to express all that dwells in us subconsciously like a dream.") These rhythms express alternately the atavistic fear of the oppressor, the sadism of the persecutor, and the latent masochism of the victim. The words of the narrator are delivered in strictly prescribed rhythm, and the relative pitch of each syllable is indicated—this is a departure from the *Sprechstimme* in Schoenberg's early *Pierrot Lunaire*, where the narrator recited the words at a given absolute musical pitch, but it repeats the system of the same composer's recent *Ode to Napoleon*, where dramatic suspense was also expressed by a wavering, indeterminate pitch.

But none of these devices is used impressionistically, that is, as an end in itself. Nor are they employed solely out of a desire to create an emotional climate; they also have a formal function. The thematic introduction in the trumpets, divided into two symmetrical motifs, contains the physiognomy of the entire work. Its rhythms, intervals, structure, and orchestration indicate the events to follow. There is virtually not a single musical occurrence in the entire composition that is not derived from this thematic introduction. The grouping of

three notes in the first motif, which appears originally in the form of triplets, is later repeated in groupings of three rhythmically varied notes (one eighth and two sixteenths)—a rhythmical occurrence already used in the beginning as an accompanying figure in the strings, or in groups of either three sixteenths or two eighths and one quarter-note. The intervals of the first motif—minor second, fifth and sixth, and the tritone that ensues from the combination of minor second and fifth—are, in either their original or inverted form, the only structure-forming intervals of the whole work. Their inversion plays a special role, since the second part of the theme is actually an inverted form of the original motif.

Much of the extravagance of the orchestration is likewise already implied in the theme, where accompanying *tremolo* figures in the strings set the jagged trumpet motif in relief. Technically, a good deal of this is done by the employment of a twelve-tone row, Schoenberg's dominant form of compositional technique in his later years. But this fact itself is of only secondary importance.

The significance of the total work lies in its ordered evolution from a minute initial nucleus, to which every subsequent occurrence is then related. Thus what impresses the casual listener as a merely rhapsodic sketch is, for the more penetrating ear, woven into hermetic tightness by the most intricate relationships.

SIMILARLY, the Jewish prayer melody at the close is not grafted onto the texture but grows out of it logically, and not only because it is repeatedly hinted at before it appears in its entirety. Here Schoenberg works somewhat like Proust, who in his great novel gives us many glimpses of a character—a name, then a sentence, then a notion—before showing him fully. The logic of the prayer is made quite manifest in the preceding intervals, which appear first in the original motif, later on in its evolution, and finally in the prayer itself.

A most amazing feat is thus accomplished: a Jewish melody is preserved authentically by the use of the most intricate and complex devices of modern Western music. Yet at no point is the listener aware of a disparity between the Jewish timbre and the modern

texture. Both are logically blended into one unity.*

In making a development from a tiny initial nucleus his chief aesthetic principle, Schoenberg accomplishes several things at once. He creates a dramatic impression by disguising, on the surface, the strictness of his technique; he weds his Jewish emotion and background to his high prowess as a composer of Western art music (thus pointing out a feasible way of bridging one of the gaps between the Jewish and Western cultural heritage); and he produces a work whose parts are so organically related that its unity satisfies the classical ideal. Three problems are solved at once: ideologically, culturally, and aesthetically. In this writer's opinion, *A Survivor of Warsaw* marks a peak in Schoenberg's career; and it continues radically his development away from romanticism and ushers in a new period of classicism.

Two factors outside Schoenberg's own orbit as a creator seem to have made possible the achievement of this work of classical perfection on a theme ostensibly unsuitable to such treatment.

Paradoxical as it may seem, one factor was Schoenberg's inability to grasp completely the tragedy that was his subject matter. His text is written out of sympathy, hardly out of true empathy, and certainly not out of personal experience. Let us compare the stilted and artificial literary Expressionism of his cantata with the words of another musician, who, though of smaller gifts, was an actual witness of events similar to those Schoenberg describes. Shalom Katz was a cantor in Bucharest. When the Nazis took over Rumania he was sent to a concentration camp. He writes: "In the concentration camp where I was prisoner the SS-men one day singled out two thousand ———"

* This testifies once more to the great potentialities and flexibility of the twelve-tone row, which, in the hands of a skilled craftsman, unbends to anything musically accomplishable. Thus Alban Berg employs it to quote a Bach *Chorale* in his *Violin Concerto* and a passage from Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* in his *Lyric Suite*, just as Schoenberg uses it here. And both composers exploit the twelve-tone row's melismatic potentialities at the same time. Nor are these feats *tours de force*; on the contrary, a strict analysis of each work reveals the immediate musical cogency of the device.

Jews, among them myself. We were to be shot—this for the purpose of providing Hitler's supermen a few hours of relief from their boring role as fighters for the 'New Order.' We were handed pickaxes and shovels and unceremoniously ordered to dig our own graves. Having provided, each one of us, a place which would be a sure abode of release from the tortures of the so-called 'upholders of civilization,' I prevailed upon the SS-men to let me raise my voice in song during that last moment of our lives, both for my own sake and for that of my fellow-Jews. That this was permitted was doubtless with the thought of deriving further evil joy from our hapless plight. I was pushed out from the ranks of the condemned, and I began to sing *El Mole Rachamim*, the Hebrew prayer for the dead."

If we discount the various ironic remarks about the Nazis—put in undoubtedly for the sake of his audience—we find no feeling, no emotion in Mr. Katz's account. This is the natural reaction of one who has actually lived through terror. There is nothing here of the crescendo of Schoenberg's text: "... they began again, first slowly one two three four, became faster and faster so fast that it finally sounded like a stampede of wild horses and quite of a sudden, in the middle of it, they began singing *Shema Yisrael*." For Cantor Katz the rendition of *El Mole Rachamim* is a logical ceremony. One has lived by prayers that fit the respective occasion, and now one dies by them. It is vain to try to comprehend the senseless inhumanity of which one is being made victim.

But for Schoenberg prayer becomes something different. This is not the first time that he uses it in his works. The oratorio *Die Jakobsleiter*, the opera *Moses und Aaron*, and finally his setting of *Kol Nidre* show that the Jewish prayer forms an integral part of his aesthetic contemplation just as the Protestant choral did for Bach. Berthold Viertel, speaking of *Die Jakobsleiter*, characterizes the significance of prayer for Schoenberg accurately enough by saying: "Schoenberg could not write an oratorio merely because it is beautiful to pray. He asks immediately: 'Do we pray?—When?—Why do we pray?—What is the root of praying?—Its aim?—Its effect?' Praying becomes a fundamental problem to him. And not

only his individual problem—but a general one. The problem of humanity. He must understand it universally, as action and fulfillment of the human soul—and in all its possibilities. He thinks it through in all its forms. He may have done so for years. Until, one day, the religious thinker, Schoenberg, had a vision which became the inspiration of the artist."

For Schoenberg, then, the tragedy of the Warsaw Ghetto is a stimulus to artistic creation. The prayer becomes a heroic climax and not, as it was in reality, the grotesque distortion of daily ritual. And so it does not matter that the composer cannot fully comprehend the horror of extermination or the obsessional motives that force those who survived it to repeat endlessly and in unemotional tones the unspeakable terror of their experience. For Schoenberg the real event becomes stuff for his program, as Prosper Mérimée's story of the cigarette girl became stuff for Bizet's *Carmen*.

YET there is a difference. In Warsaw the issue is much too large, much too overwhelming to be used simply as material for a "story." Goethe says: "The phenomenon is not separated from the observer, it is rather kneaded and woven into his individuality." This is the relation between the Warsaw tragedy and Schoenberg, whose concern with the Jewish fate is real and strong, yet whose experience of such an extreme situation as that he treats in his cantata is necessarily derivative. On the one hand, the event is too large to be comprehended by the outsider in its material details. On the other, it is too new, too imposing to be comprehended by anyone in all its broad implications. But the artist masters the issue, and is not mastered by it, by contemplating it profoundly, by "kneading" it into himself.

Schoenberg, as a Jew and a man, is thus close enough to the actual experience to be engulfed by its horror, yet at the same time he is detached enough from it, as an observer, to retain the capacity to order into music his reactions of fear, insecurity, and discomfort. On the one side we notice the strongly rhapsodic, almost hysterical procedure inside the structure of the work; but on the other, his sensitivity escapes the full impact of the experience, remains basically

unshaken; and the listener must shift the center of his attention from the event itself to the art, from consequences and self-concern to aesthetic contemplation. The integration here of Jewish melos with the highest Western art is born out of the artist's concern with the Jewish problem and his simultaneous refusal to be overcome by its limitlessness.

The "solution" of a problem by its displacement and removal to another plane seems a characteristic of our age. In most cases, artists avoid facing the aesthetic problems of their art by shifting their concern to matters of an ideological nature or to the related field of another art. Stravinsky, for instance, copes with musical problems by escaping into stage-craft, the usual nationalist composer by grafting folk melodies onto an academic texture. With Schoenberg just the opposite is true. His inability, which is everybody's, to cope with the gigantic problem of mass extermination, forces him to concern himself even more intensely with the problems of his art. This may be an escape from the reality of life; but it is an escape, in this case, into the reality of aesthetics, and as such establishes a higher truth than would have been possible for this composer had he addressed himself directly to political and social issues.

BUT conflict engendered by the momentousness of the issue does not alone explain the high musical accomplishment of *A Survivor of Warsaw*. For that we must look into the position Schoenberg occupies in the evolution of music. At the beginning of the 20th century we observe a strange duality in music. There are composers who are motivated exclusively by a human and aesthetic experience, and there are those whose concern is chiefly with immediate passing sensations. Extending Croce's famous description of d'Annunzio as "a dilettante of sensations" to the percussive composers of this century, we find in Stravinsky the *observer*, in Debussy the *object* of sensations; we see in Richard Strauss the *dilettante* of experience, and in Schoenberg the *object* of it.

Schoenberg is sucked into his experience so completely that he can write only on the basis of emotional value, never out of any literary conceit. Thereby his music has

avoided the faddism of the new avant-garde experimentalism. The composer himself, with his traditional and historical background, is the measure of this art. He is also the measure of truth—and thus he returns to Goethe's ideal of truth as beauty. (Since Schoenberg, discussions of aesthetic beauty in music, heretofore conducted along the formalistic lines of consonance and dissonance, have changed to discussions of the "veracity" of musical expression.)

That Goethe and Schoenberg intersect is hardly accidental. Goethe and Schoenberg present the artistic summits of the long evolutionary span of enlightenment that reaches from the French Revolution to the Weimar Republic. Goethe arrives at his ideal of objectivity and classicism in reaction to the *Sturm und Drang*, Schoenberg in rejection of the representational ideas and harmonic efflorescence of the romantic music of Wagner and Bruckner. Both begin as champions of romanticism; both develop into the ultimate incarnation of objective reason in the arts. (That music should reach such a stage a hundred years after literature is not so surprising when one takes into account the characteristic cultural lag of music—of which Russian and American music are perhaps prime examples—and the particular insularism of the German musician.)

Many authorities, recognizing the classicism in Schoenberg's music, have stressed its traditional side. René Leibowitz writes: "Possibly most critics have failed to notice the traditional aspect, and it may be because of this that, until now, many things have been said about the so-called special qualities of the music of Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern, while hardly anything has been mentioned about their most important quality, which is their use of the essential principles of musical composition." Schoenberg, too, likes to see himself as a traditional composer. In less capricious moments, however, he has well recognized the significance of the revolutionary side of his art. He himself writes: "The music of today is developing a field which must at first appear entirely new to us. And here probably is the difference: the field must first be cultivated. It is virgin soil. We are not at the high-point of an old art but rather at the beginning of a new one."

The truth of the matter is that though Schoenberg, like any great artist, is a true child of the past, his merit does not lie in the fact that his music evolves from tradition, but in the fact that it transcends it and points the way to a new art. What is traditional about this music, aside from the all too obvious fact that it works within the syntactical principles of Western music, is its points of departure. But the classicism, its essential achievement, is revolutionary and goes far beyond tradition.

It is this classicism that once again, after a century of private and personal musical utterance, makes it possible to objectify the musical experience of the creator, and with this the various musical tendencies that have plagued music since the early 19th century.

In the classical edifice of Schoenberg's music are fused the anti-classical tendencies of romanticism and nationalism; a cosmopolitan feeling is established that does not negate, but takes in, these different and contradictory impulses. This is the final meaning of Schoenberg's music. And in the final analysis this is also the aim of any progressive, national culture—of the culture that Jewish culture must be if it wants to enjoy the fullness of life.

THAT this aim is realized consummately in *A Survivor of Warsaw*—a work born out of two discrepancies, that between the largeness of the issue and the personal limitations of the composer, that between tradition and revolution—would show that the question of national culture and its problems stands on the threshold of a worldwide, high aesthetic solution.

But we already hear the objections of the self-appointed saviors of a Jewish national culture. The "Jewish flavor" will be lost—yet it is precisely the Jewish melismatic texture that is preserved in *A Survivor of Warsaw*. The music is too intricate and complex—yet it is precisely this complexity that is alone capable of comprehending modern life and modern aesthetic purpose. And finally they will say that, even so, such a blending of modern texture and folk idiom is too difficult to undertake. Is it really difficult? Victor Hugo answered that question long ago: "It is either easy—or impossible."

Who's Superstitious?

IRVING KRISTOL

ROBERT INGERSOLL once caused a public commotion by defying God, if he existed, to strike him dead on the spot. To the chagrin of the pious, his challenge was ignored and he continued blithely on his atheistic way. However, on July 21, 1899 he did at long last die. Each man drew the moral that best pleased him, and it would seem that, at the very least, the experiment was inconclusive.

This has not deterred the National Committee of Thirteen Against Superstition and Fear from once again defying the supernatural powers-that-be (or that are not). On Friday, August 13, the Committee celebrated its second anniversary by launching the First American Exhibition on Superstition, Prejudice, and Fear at the Museum of Natural History in New York. The exhibit lasted thirteen days, of course.

To enter the exhibit at the press preview, I passed under a cloud of open umbrellas and came face to face with a giant cake sporting thirteen lit candles. Against a nearby pillar, the photographers were taking shots of a young boy grimly poised over a carefully assembled pile of shattered mirrors with hammer in hand. At the photographers' request, he laughed hysterically for about three minutes while he was "shot" from various angles. Since he had not so much as touched the mirrors, why should he worry?

The first display to catch the eye was a collection of nightmarish sketches by John Vassos, illustrating potamophobia (fear of running water), phagophobia (fear of swallowing), batophobia (fear of falling objects), climacophobia (fear of stairways), as well as more banal afflictions like necrophobia (fear of the dead) and agoraphobia (fear of open spaces). It was a most awesome spectacle, though its significance was not exactly obvious. Apparently the Committee frowned upon anyone's being afraid of the dead, though it had absolutely no constructive suggestions on that score. It also seemed to be displeased at anyone's being scared by stairways (on which 22.9% of all household accidents take place) or falling objects (bombs and the like were

not excepted). The idea was to get all this nonsense out of your head and purify yourself for healthy living (where?). Despite this drawback, the display drove home its lesson and scared more people into a fear of phobias they had never heard of than one might have thought possible in this superstitious age.

FROM superstition to prejudice is, according to the Committee, practically no step at all, and posters warned: "A black cat can't hurt you—superstition and prejudice will" and "Superstition is ignorance—prejudice is a curse." To assist the psychological effect, there was a garish painting of a witch doctor pointing to a scapegoat, illustrations from the book *The Races of Mankind* by the anthropologists Ruth Benedict and Gene Weltfish, and more exhibits.

The posters and exhibits made their point with commendable frankness: the root of prejudice is that people think that other people are *different*, whereas, as everyone should know and as science demonstrates, other people are really the same. I could not help thinking how extremely fortunate it is that science is able to prove that there are no "racial instincts" which justify exclusion or oppression, and that the idea of democracy has its sanction in biologic fact. This called to mind another political system—Nazism, which had sought its justification in biologic fact; happily, its "facts" proved to be worthless as scientific currency. Yet—scientists are always disproving one another with such frightening frequency. . . . The procedure itself, of referring to biology as the court of last appeal, has always seemed to me to be a risky enterprise. Since I am ignorant of biology, it is as an article of faith and morals that I have always been prepared to accept equality of treatment for all men. Faith, it is known, is a weak reed, as are morals. But is science a stronger one? The Committee of Thirteen was quite sure that it is.

One exhibit, especially attractive, demanded: "Can you tell a man's race or religion by his appearance?" Below the question there was a row of numbered photographs, which could be conveniently identified at a nearby panel. To begin with, there was a photograph of a man, neatly dressed and prosperous-looking, and who had been lit up

garishly by the photographer's flash. He turned out to be a Negro physician, and I would never have guessed it. Then there was a beautiful woman whom I would have sworn to be Rita Hayworth but who was really an "American Jewish girl"; I was pleased but surprised. There was a soldier who was the spit and image of an Italian boy in my old platoon; but the panel told me flatly that he was a Nisei. My only consolations were the Irish lass from Galway county and the Russian Caucasian girl, neither of whom could have been anything else, and whom I spotted right off.

In other exhibits, there were snapshots of Chinese and Negro Jews, and if I had met them on the East Side, I would have passed them by without a *Shalom*. A poster read: "There are dark men and light men—short and tall men in every race"; it bore sketches of three men in bathing suits, one short and white, one tall and dark, and the third dumpy, middling, and muddy. I thought penitently of all the occasions when I and my friends (including Negroes) had spoken glibly as if Negroes were "dark" and white men "light." The poster which most ruthlessly revealed the aberrations that lay in wait for those who have neglected their biology was one in which a factory worker whispered: "I wouldn't work next to a guy with freckles."

OUTSIDE, breathing in the gasoline-scented air of Central Park, I closed my eyes and bid nostalgic farewell to a world that knew not the redeeming truths of biology. Where Jews wore *payes* and garbardine coats and looked Jewish. Where Japanese ate rice with chopsticks and spoke Japanese (*real* Japanese, which is not just like American only different). Where Negroes had dark skins. Where Jewish girls looked, occasionally, like Molly Picon and were likely to be named Ruth or Rachel. Where scientific anthropology had not yet proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that everyone is exactly like everyone else, despite appearances. And where the only rule that told people how to behave was that superstitious old saw: "Love thy fellow man as thyself"—even if he is different, even if he is very different, and even if we don't know.

We have progressed mightily since those primitive days.

THE STUDY OF MAN

OPINION POLLS AND PUBLIC POLICY

How Scientifically Can We Measure the People's Will?

ROBERT COBB MYERS

BORED with election forecasting, both George Gallup and Elmo Roper, the two leading personalities in public-opinion polling, are seeking new worlds to conquer. Gallup last spring, while lecturing to a group of Princeton undergraduates, complained that it seemed downright silly to continue telling people the day before an election how they were going to vote the next day, but that he did not see how he could discontinue these predictions in the face of the huge popular demand for them. Roper, for his part, announced on September 9 in his New York *Herald Tribune* column that he was through publishing predictions on the outcome of this year's presidential election unless something

How scientific are public-opinion polls when they report, not how the people are going to vote—where the polls are generally right—but how people think: about labor, war, divorce, and so on? ROBERT COBB MYERS here examines the ambition of the pollsters to establish themselves as an accepted, accurate gauge of the public mind, so that they might serve as a guide to decision and action in the broad fields of public policy. He suggests that the difficulties involved in making the polls a respectable scientific yardstick of what people think are very far from being overcome. Mr. Myers is a lecturer in social psychology in the department of psychology of Princeton University. He was educated at the University of Geneva, Boston University, the University of Wisconsin, and Stanford University, served as a social science analyst with the War Department during the war, and later taught sociology at the University of Oregon. He was born in Akron, Ohio, thirty-seven years ago.

entirely unpredictable occurred between then and November 2. "I can think of nothing duller or more intellectually barren," he wrote, "than acting like a sports announcer who feels he must pretend he is witnessing a neck-and-neck race that will end in a photo finish or a dramatic upset for the favorite—and then finally have to announce that the horse which was eight lengths ahead at the turn is still eight lengths ahead."

These pronouncements by no means presage the imminent dissolution of Roper's and Gallup's organizations. Their attention has already been largely diverted to other matters. These other matters, in Mr. Roper's words, include attempts "to discover the opinions that people hold on vital questions; to try to get back of this to the difficult, and sometimes hazy reasons *why* they hold their opinions; . . . to try to discover areas of agreement and of ignorance and how they vary by geographical location, size of place, economic rank, professional status." These problems also interest Dr. Gallup, although he is somewhat less interested than Roper in *why* people say they think this or that on any specific question. And to Roper's list Gallup would most emphatically add market research—the attempt to predict public behavior that affects the cash register—as a most challenging, and profitable, activity.

THE history of election polling can be neatly divided into two periods. The era prior to 1936 can be thought of as the "catch-as-catch-can" period, that subsequent to 1936 as the "cross-section" period. The first period may be said to have begun in 1824 when the Harrisburg

Pennsylvanian took a straw vote on the presidential chances of John Quincy Adams, and ended in 1936 when the *Literary Digest* predicted a landslide for Landon. The principal methods of obtaining opinions in the "catch-as-catch-can" period were to solicit responses by mail, or to print ballots in newspapers and magazines and ask readers to fill them out and send them to the sponsors of the poll. In some few instances opinions were obtained by interview. But in all cases the sample was haphazard.

The "cross-section" period dates from 1936, when both Gallup and Roper predicted Roosevelt's election, Roper coming within one per cent of the popular vote, but Gallup underestimating Roosevelt's popular support by seven per cent. Both had operated by having interviewers personally question a "scientifically selected cross-section" of the nation's voters. Basing their selection on the long-known statistical theories or "laws" of Bernoulli, Pearson, and other mathematicians, they had chosen for questioning a few thousand people who roughly approximated a stratified random sample of the electorate.

Since 1936, although the method was constantly being refined and improved, the focus in public-opinion polling, as far as the public was concerned, remained on election forecasting. Now we are notified that the polls are ready, willing, and able to shift to a new focus—"opinion-casting" on questions of social, economic, and political importance which affect public policy. Their ambition is to guide public policy, through making the results of opinion polls available to elected and appointed government officials.

Gallup has enunciated the new purpose clearly (in *A Guide to Public Opinion Polls*, Princeton, 1948): "Great leaders will seek information from every reliable source about the people whom *they wish to lead* [*italics mine*]. For this reason* they will inevitably pay more attention to facts about the current state of public thinking and of public knowledge. The public-opinion poll will be a useful tool in enabling them to reach the highest level of their effectiveness as leaders." One theory of leadership and the democratic process implicit in Gallup's statement—the adjustment of the statements, and perchance the policy, of candidates to presumed mass-opinion—can be seen in operation in every political campaign: what its consequences may be for the day-to-day

functioning of a democratic society is another matter, which we will consider more fully later.

ASSUMING that issue polling can so crucially influence public policy as its advocates imply, it would seem proper that it should be undertaken by non-profit, tax-supported, or endowed agencies. After all, it claims to be nothing less than a scientific register of "the will of the people," and even if it made no such claim it might well win acceptance as the ultimate sanction of any proposed policy. Yet, at the moment, there are only two non-profit agencies conducting nationwide public policy polls: the United States Department of Agriculture, and the National Opinion Research Center, which functions on Marshall Field Foundation funds and is attached to the University of Chicago. However, the American Institute of Public Opinion, which is jointly owned by Gallup and his sales manager, Harold Anderson, is today the most important single instrument in this field. It is organized and run, as is any private business corporation, for profit. Elmo Roper, Incorporated, much of whose work falls into the public-policy area, conducts the *Fortune* poll as well as undertaking other private contracts and commissions.

It is worth remarking that both Gallup and Roper have now extended themselves into the international sphere. Roper's worldwide organization is known as International Public Opinion Research and is headed by Elmo Wilson, one of the co-authors of the *Time* magazine "Current Affairs Test," and until recently research director for programs of the Columbia Broadcasting System. Gallup's international organization consists of twelve nation-wide privately owned polls, in as many foreign countries, which interlock in their finances and direction with his AIPO. In addition, in the United States, there is a host of imitators at state and city levels—some commercial, some quasi-commercial, and some purely non-profit.

Essentially, Gallup rests his claim for the important role public-policy polling may play in public life on two main premises. The first of these is that the American Institute of Public Opinion is a *scientific measuring instrument*. The second, essential to bolster the claim to be a scientific yardstick of public opinion, maintains that "polling on issues is essentially the same as the problem of polling on candidates." We will examine each of these in turn. We

shall concentrate on Gallup's organization in our discussion; but it will be clear that much of what we say is applicable to the polling process in general, as conducted by all the organizations now in the field.

IS THE American Institute of Public Opinion a scientific instrument of measurement? To be considered scientific it is generally agreed that an experiment or claim must be repeatable, verifiable, and impartial.

Repeatability. A finding in order to be repeatable must present all the pertinent facts of the experiment. In the case of cross-section polling this means, for example, that when Gallup reports that 73 per cent of the people in the United States believe that Russia will start a war of aggression (reported last February), full data concerning his sample cross-section should be available, including how many people in each stratum and sub-stratum were questioned. To date, however, Gallup refuses to release details concerning these cross-sections, or to publicize the *total* number of people questioned in any particular poll, presenting his results in *percentages only*. He persists in this despite repeated warnings from reputable psychologists that the practice tends to put his reports outside the bounds of scientific respectability. In a monograph on *Opinion-Attitude Methodology* prepared in 1946 for the American Psychological Association, Professor Quinn McNemar of Stanford stated that this persistent failure "to give the number of cases in their over-all samples and in the sub-groups involved in breakdowns does not inspire confidence in the scientific value of their data."

Nevertheless, it should be noted that if an investigator wants to take the trouble to travel to Princeton, New Jersey, he may, if he is considered to be "qualified," examine the punched machine cards which are made up for each respondent in a national poll. Few scientists, however, will concede that Gallup has fully discharged his obligation to scientific procedure by this little publicized provision.

Verifiability. The only opinion poll that is ever actually verified in the strict sense of the term is the last poll just before an election. And there is some evidence to support the belief that the number of people questioned in this crucial last-minute polling is greatly in excess of the number questioned at any other time or in any other type of poll.

In sampling theory, however, a generally accepted means of verification is to take two or more samples and test the results to see whether or not it is probable that they were drawn from the same population. For us this means that if two polling organizations should poll on the same question, and come up with results that are essentially the same, we could say that they had verified each other in the sense that both their samples had probably been drawn from the *same* population or "universe." However, even if both samples gave the same result, it might be possible that they both erred in the same way in misrepresenting the population. Therefore, not even sampling theory provides us with a means of *verifying* that a poll properly represents the population as a whole.

In this connection it is interesting to note the wide discrepancy existing in the following reports on a similar question by Gallup and Roper. The Roper report appears in the April 1948 issue of *Fortune*, and the Gallup report was released to his 125 client newspapers on March 17, 1948.

GALLUP (AIPO)

Question: Do you think that prices, in general, will be higher, lower, or about the same six months from now?

Higher	14%
Lower	39
Same	36
No opinion	11

ROPER (*Fortune*)

Question: Do you think that the prices of most of the things you buy will be higher, lower, or about the same six months from now?

54%
9
22
15

Because of the slight difference in question wording, are we to interpret this as meaning that most people think that prices in general will go down, but that the prices of things they buy will go up? That would seem to be nonsense. Other explanations seem more sensible: perhaps the two samples represent different populations, or the differences shown are differences caused by the instructions each organization gives its interviewers on the way it should ask questions, or by some other factor extraneous to the question itself. Which is correct? No one knows.

Impartiality. "Polling organizations," writes Gallup in the 1948 edition of his *A Guide to Public Opinion Polls*, "can gain acceptance only by maintaining a position of complete impar-

tiality." It is now pertinent to review his record on this point of scientific respectability. In 1936, in 1940, and in 1944, the reports of the AIPO consistently overestimated the Republican vote and underestimated the Democratic vote. Gallup himself is a registered Republican. And, in explaining his 1944 results before the Congressional Committee to Investigate Campaign Expenditures of the 78th Congress, he admitted that his error lay in his hunch that a trend toward Dewey had set in which his poll had not caught—he had therefore "adjusted" the Republican opinion-poll results upward, and had reported this figure to his newspaper clients rather than the poll results as received from his interviewers. (Adjustments of various kinds are, of course, a necessary part of polling.) Furthermore, he complained that his sampling had been at fault—he had polled too many upper-income and too few lower-income voters. A group of impartial statisticians called in by the congressional committee agreed that Gallup's explanations, while devastating, were correct.

IN THE case of the AIPO's public-policy polling, too, professional psychologists have, through their own research, uncovered two areas in which AIPO reports have shown extreme partiality or bias.

Professor Ross Stagner of the University of Illinois investigated the pre-war Gallup and Roper polls dealing with the isolationist-interventionist controversy up to 1940. He published his findings in the August 1940 issue of *Sociometry*, and said, in part: "A comparison of the Gallup and *Fortune* surveys of American attitudes regarding intervention suggests that both policies give some advantage to the interventionist position in forming questions, but that the American Institute (Gallup) is considerably the worse offender in this respect. It seems certain that the publication of poll results giving a somewhat one-sided view of things, and with some over-estimation of the interventionist opinion, has facilitated a 'bandwagon' movement among persons previously undecided or mildly isolationist in attitude. . . . In the Gallup organization . . . there has been a tendency to seek dramatic, aggressive topics for poll questions and to state these in simple, positive form. . . . Undoubtedly . . . some unconscious bias in favor of intervention . . . has repressed the observation that a number of items showed obvious defects in construction and that these

were extraordinarily likely to be of such a type as to over-estimate aggressive opinions."

The second area in which AIPO bias in published reports has been demonstrated is that of labor-union organization. In the 1946-47 Winter issue of the *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Professor Arthur Kornhauser of Wayne University published the results of an exhaustive study he had made of all the questions dealing with organized labor and published by the leading polls from 1940 to 1945 inclusive.

Kornhauser's conclusions were as follows: "Of the 155 questions examined, only 8 deal with positive or favorable features of unionism; 66 are neutral or doubtful; and 81 are concerned with union faults, activities the public condemns, or proposed restrictions upon unions. Three-fourths of all the AIPO (Gallup) questions, and about one-third of the questions from the other agencies are in the negative direction. . . . The odds run strongly against labor. . . . It is interesting to note that the questions which are asked repeatedly (notably by the AIPO) are almost all ones in the unfavorable category. They thus serve to reiterate and reinforce in the public's thinking points against unions which are already condemned. . . . Polls on labor would often look very different if corresponding attitudes toward business were reported at the same time. But few, indeed, are the questions to bring out these faults of business."

The "bandwagon" question. Bias may be particularly important in the case of public polling because of what has been called the "bandwagon" effect: the tendency of people to make up their minds in the direction of what they believe to be majority opinion.

This "bandwagon effect" has been shown to be not so important in the case of national elections, because voting opinion seems to be remarkably stable and long-run. Most people make up their minds early regarding the presidential candidate for whom they will vote, and keep them made up that way. In 1940 and 1944 Professor Paul Lazarsfeld of Columbia University's Bureau of Applied Social Research questioned people about their voting intentions a month before the election, and then interviewed them after the election as to their actual vote. In both instances he found that 87 per cent actually voted as they had said they intended to vote a month before the election. And only two per cent of the total changed from one candidate to another. (The 1944

study is fully reported in *The People's Choice*, New York, 1944.)

Published election forecasts seem to be effective opinion *influencers* only in the case of persons who have not already formed an opinion and who read and believe the poll's report* and who do not live in an area where majority opinion is at variance with national majority opinion. In the last case, two "bandwagon" effects operate and the local is likely to be more important than the national. In Alabama, for example, the undecided votes would probably be influenced less by the poll reports of Dewey's national lead than the local majority in favor of Thurmond.

HOWEVER, when we turn from election polling to public-policy polling we find an entirely different situation, particularly in the case of new issues. The general rule of social psychology which applies here is that *people are suggestible to the induction of new opinion in direct relationship to the degree to which their opinion is not already crystallized on the issue*. This means, for example, that if every newspaper in the land should espouse the views of Philip Wylie in derogation of the "Cult of Ma" it would have very little effect on the purchase of Mother's Day cards; but that if the newspapers should feed us a steady diet of one-sided derogatory opinion concerning the people of "Zambodia," it might well be decisive, since our Zambodian opinions are not only uninformed but zero.

A classic experiment along these lines was carried out in 1933 by Albert D. Annis and Norman C. Meier, and reported in 1934 in the *Journal of Social Psychology*. They prepared two series of editorials to be run in a student newspaper, the *Daily Iowan*, one consistently favorable to Mr. W. Morris Hughes (Prime Minister of Australia from 1915 to 1923), and the other consistently unfavorable. Both series indicated that Mr. Hughes was soon to visit the Iowa campus as a guest speaker. One group of students was given the unfavorable editorials to read, and another, the favorable. An opinion questionnaire about Hughes was then administered, and it was found that

* E. F. Goldman of Princeton's Office of Public Opinion Research reported in 1944 that approximately 44 per cent of our voters had never heard of the opinion polls, and only nine per cent claimed to read their reports regularly.

98 per cent of the subjects reading favorable editorials were favorably biased, and 86 per cent of those reading unfavorable editorials were unfavorably biased. These induced attitudes persisted unchanged for at least four months.

Annis and Meier state: "As a general conclusion it may be observed that opinion can be induced by means of judiciously selected suggestions in as short a time as seven issues of a newspaper, even when [they should have said *especially when*] the person, institution, or question may be quite unknown at the inception of the series. . . ."

Even so apparently neutral an act as asking a person's opinion, if it is on a question about which he knows practically nothing, might change his "opinion" (that is, what he tells an interviewer). Leo Crespi conducted an experiment in Trenton, New Jersey, to determine what effect, if any, the interview experience itself might have on the opinions of respondents (*Public Opinion Quarterly*, Spring 1948). Crespi ran a standard poll in which he obtained names and addresses; then later, employing the pretext that the first questionnaires had been accidentally destroyed by fire, he re-interviewed these same people on the same questions. On the second interview he found that the number of "No Opinion" answers was significantly less than the number which had been given on the first interview.

Logically, it would appear likely that the "No Opinion" respondents might well shift preponderantly in one direction or another through the use of biased or "loaded" question wording. With one million people a year being asked questions about various matters, the total impact of opinion polling in actually affecting opinions may be sizeable. However, to deliberately set out to shift opinion in a certain direction by interviewing would be prohibitively tedious and expensive.* The effect could be achieved much more efficiently and quickly by a direct publicity campaign in mass media of communication.

* Samuel Flowerman and Marie Jahoda, writing about polls on anti-Semitism in the April 1946 COMMENTARY, estimated that at the most 150,000 people had been asked questions about anti-Semitism, and concluded that "even if the interviews were not innocuous and did create anti-Semitic feeling in a few cases where none existed before, which we doubt, the total number of those affected must be insignificant."

IS THE problem of polling on issues essentially the same as the problem of polling on candidates?

In effect, Gallup tells us that since he can predict election winners he is scientifically qualified to measure the public's temper on all sorts of questions. However, there are many points at which the problem of polling on issues is far more difficult and complex than the problem of polling on candidates for political office.

The cross-section. The proper cross-section for predicting the outcome of an election is a stratified sample of persons of voting age who are likely to vote. The characteristics of our voting population are fairly well known. In comparison to their numbers in the total population, the voting population includes more males than females, more older than younger persons, more wealthy than poor, and more educated than uneducated. Most Negroes in the South have to be subtracted.

Can this voting cross-section be used for polling on public policy questions? If not, what kind of a cross-section should be used? Why? These questions have not been answered, and cannot be answered until it is determined for what purpose public-policy polls are to be used, and what they are supposed to predict. If one believes that for all purposes of public-policy formulation every citizen's opinion, no matter what his age or status, is just as important as every other citizen's, then the question is simple: one simply uses a cross-section based upon the census. But, ordinarily, the matter is not considered to be quite so simple, and no practical politician could ever be convinced that the opinion of an illiterate migrant laborer on the question of raising or lowering the tariff, for instance, is as important as the opinion of a New York import-export broker.

Or, to use another example, are the opinions of women and oldsters regarding military conscription as important as those of young men? Some people in looking at this problem as a whole have thrown up their hands and concluded that if public policy polling is to be used as the basis for governmental decisions, it would probably be necessary to construct a different cross-section for every issue.

Knowledge of the issue. The question, "For whom are you going to vote for President of the United States?" is clear-cut and meaningful—at least to voters. This clear-cut and meaningful quality is not present, however, in most

public policy questions. Here we are faced both with semantical and informational difficulties.

An apocryphal story is told that illustrates the semantical difficulty. An audience research poll asked "Do you think too many adjectives are used on the radio?" The responses supposedly were: 5 per cent "Yes"; 5 per cent "No"; and 90 per cent "What are adjectives?" Something like this can be cleared up by pre-testing the question on a few people; but the matter can become somewhat more complicated. A writer in the magazine *Tide* (March 14, 1947) reported his experience with the question: "Are you in favor of or opposed to incest?" Forty per cent of the sample (size not stated) had no opinion, and 33.5 per cent of the rest were in favor. Another question was: "Which of the following statements most closely coincides with your opinion of the Metallic Metals Act: it would be a good move on the part of the United States; it would be a good thing but should be left to the individual states; it is all right for foreign countries but shouldn't be required here; it is of no value at all?" Needless to say, the "Metallic Metals Act" does not exist; but seventy per cent selected one of these alternatives, the majority being in favor of leaving it to the states.

There are many occasions when, whether the question is understood perfectly by the respondent or not, he lacks sufficient information on which to form an opinion or make an intelligent reply. Yet, as the story about the "Metallic Metals Act" shows, it is more ego-enhancing to exhibit an opinion on a topic than not to. Consequently, many polls blithely present the most complex issues to their cross-sections—and come up with a set of answers labeled "Public Opinion." The social utility of this sort of thing is certainly questionable. According to an AIPO report released to the press last February 18, 53 per cent of the American public thought that the Taft-Hartley Act should be revised, repealed, or left unchanged. The rest admitted they had not heard of it or had no opinion. Did 53 per cent of the American public last February really have sufficient information about the Taft-Hartley Act on which to base a meaningful opinion? Yet there it is. And this is just the sort of thing that people who "wish to lead" are invited to rely upon for their guidance.

Intensity of opinion. How deeply set is the

opinion? How strongly is it felt? The difficulty in estimating the intensity with which an opinion is held does not present serious obstacles to election forecasting. Of two persons who both indicate that they are going to vote for Truman, one may feel ten times as strongly about it as the other. No matter; each has only one vote. However, this problem of intensity of opinion becomes very real when serious attempts are made to predict other than voting behavior. During wartime, for example, the administrators of domestic propaganda should be far more interested in the intensity with which the enemy is hated than in simply *how many people say they hate the enemy*.

Overt and covert opinion. Overt opinion is that which is communicated to somebody else. Covert opinion is that which is kept to one's self. And there is no *necessary* correlation between the two. Fortunately for election forecasting there has, at least up until 1948, been but little tendency for people to mask or conceal their choice of candidate in responding to an interviewer's questions.

A COMPARABLE degree of candor cannot be expected to exist in all public-policy polling. Many publicly expressed opinions on Communism are probably stereotyped socially-acceptable opinions rather than a true reflection of covert opinions. The same might be said about the overtly expressed opinions of many Southerners toward the various issues that are euphemistically lumped under the symbol of "states rights." Public-opinion polling probably would have to go to the lengths which Alfred Kinsey invented and employed in his studies of sexual attitudes and behavior in order to solve this problem of reliably transferring covertly held opinions into overt expression. And even then the pollsters could not be sure.

Symbolic vs. non-symbolic behavior. One of the several reasons why election forecasting has been so successful is that voting in an opinion poll and voting in an election booth are similar types of behavior. In both cases, all one has to do is "symbolize" one's allegiance—in one case by the use of spoken words, in the other by marking an X in a box or by pulling a lever or pushing a button. If one wanted to predict from a poll how much money a party would raise, it would be no simple matter, as we would be trying to predict real behavior as distinguished from "symbolic" behavior.

Yet almost all market-research polling and much public-policy polling does try to do just this. For example, *Life* magazine recently proclaimed on its editorial page that Roper polls indicated that the majority of people would resort to the black market in the United States rather than again submit to rationing. This is getting into risky territory: *Life* has predicted, from what amounts to a vote against rationing, the implementation of this opinion by actual dealing on the black market.

The prediction of behavior at the non-symbolic level—the level of the real act—from behavior at the symbolic level is obviously bound up with the problem of gauging intensity of opinion. Nevertheless, there is more to the problem than this. Some persons may actually believe very intensely that they will do thus-and-so in a certain situation, only to find themselves incapable of so acting when faced with the actual situation itself. Professor LaPiere of Stanford, pointing up this problem, asks us to suppose that we offer one hundred thousand dollars to a person to eat a pound of raw human flesh. The person very intensely wants the hundred thousand dollars and very strongly believes that he will carry through his share of the bargain to obtain it. Yet when faced with the actual fare he faints dead away, being prevented from following through by his prior cultural conditioning.

It is on this point, too, as Drs. Flowerman and Jahoda pointed out in their article on polls on anti-Semitism in this department two years ago, that any attempt to predict actual anti-Semitic behavior from poll responses classified by pollsters as anti-Semitic must fall down. We may learn that so and so many per cent of the people think Jews have too much economic power: to predict then what they would do about it, if anything, is virtually impossible. Even when we ask them directly what they would do about it, we must remember the critical difference between checking on a card a possibility—"would you join a movement to reduce Jewish power?"—and *actually* joining a movement.

Question selection and wording. A final point which should be made in our discussion of basic differences between election forecasting and public policy polling has to do with the selection of questions. In election forecasting this matter presents no problem at all. Respondents are simply asked for whom they intend

to vote. The question, one might say, is chosen for the pollster by the election he is attempting to forecast. But in public-policy polling we must realize that there are as many questions as there are issues, and there are as many issues as there are stars in the sky. Also, there is an infinite variety of emphasis and form and approach that questions may take toward any given issue. Public-policy polling thus presents us with this most important, and currently unsolved, problem: Of the myriad issues and myriad approaches to these issues, who selects the questions to be asked and reported upon, and rejects all others?

TO SUM UP: A poll can ask people what they think about an issue, and then report what a sample of respondents say they think. If one has selected a proper cross-section of the total population it may even be possible to predict that, if everybody in the country were asked the same question, their division of responses as to what they say they think would be the same as the division of responses of the sample, allowing for a reasonable degree of sampling error. But what this opinion means—what it means to those who give it, and what it means when confidently stated as a percentage of “the American people”—this we do not know. To suggest that these reports of opinion, of whose meaning no one is sure, should become the firm basis for the conducting of a democratic society, is not science. It is dangerous irresponsibility.

In conclusion, let us assume that all the perplexing problems of measuring public opinion on any and all issues are eventually ironed out, and we have an instrument whereby our political leaders may automatically assess mass opinion. What then? Should political leaders, both elected and appointed, ignore their presumably larger resources of information and wider experience, and abdicate their prerogative of choice of methods and timing in guiding affairs of state to blindly follow the “dictates of the people”? Or keep their views concealed until the people “come around” or are “brought around”?

The development of the perfect opinion poll,

if such there ever be—and the use of the present-day polls as if they were perfect—presents us then with major problems in political philosophy. One aspect of these problems has been well put by Harwood Childs (*An Introduction to Public Opinion*): “Assuming that the voices of Gallup and the magazine *Fortune* are also the voices of the people, the question arises whether they are also the voices of God and should govern the acts of legislators. Are we prepared to have public opinion not only reign but also govern?” And Professor John C. Ranney (“Do the Polls Serve Democracy?”, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Fall 1946), answering some criticisms of the role of polls in democracy, presents a very powerful one himself: democracy, he points out, is not the mechanical register of the will of the people. Essential to it is a process of discussion and consideration, and interplay between legislature and executive, and between different political interests, which gradually informs and brings out the implications of various proposals. “There is something not only pathetic but also indicative of a basic weakness in the polls’ conception of democracy in the stories of those who tell interviewers they could give a ‘better answer’ to the questions if only they had time to read up a bit or think things over. It is precisely this reading up and thinking over which are the essence of political participation. . . .”

Gallup would no doubt retort to these criticisms, as he often has, with the statement that “Almost always the public is ahead of its legislators.” But the present writer feels, from his observation of public policy polling, that, rather, *almost always the public opinion poll is ahead of the public*. By selection of questions to emphasize and de-emphasize, by timing, often by “adjustments” inevitably influenced by the pollsters’ own point of view, the polls are more likely to be selling the poll-owners’ opinions as public opinion than public opinion itself.

The real issue at the present time would seem to be not what to do when the polls are perfect, if they ever can be: but what to do about their claim to be accepted as reliable expressions of the national will when they are so far from being that, on many counts.

LETTERS FROM READERS

Our Oldest "Minority"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have read with much interest, satisfaction, and enjoyment the article entitled "Alaska's Nuremberg Laws" by Felix S. Cohen in the August issue of COMMENTARY. It is Dr. Cohen's usually scholarly and readable presentation of facts which escape many of our thinking people because the Indians are for the most part a localized and not-too-vocal minority.

When the National Congress of American Indians, an organization composed of persons of Indian blood, for which I serve as President, presented the facts on discrimination against Indians to the President's Civil Rights Committee, the Chairman of the Committee brushed aside most of our complaints with the remark that we are in a different category from other citizens. Dr. Cohen's article deals with that myth. If the general public will begin to realize that the government cannot play the dictator with Indian rights without learning the tricks of dictatorship to practice on other citizens, perhaps it will not continue to ignore us.

Senators and representatives from the Western states will be first to deny that Indian rights are being ignored. They will say, as they have told me, that Congress is burdened with legislation concerning the Indian and that much time is spent listening to Indian witnesses. An examination of most of this legislation and the transcripts of testimony will reveal, however, that it is for the purpose of "emancipating" the Indian from his property and that the witnesses speak only to the record. Such was the legislation about which Dr. Cohen speaks so forcefully—the Tongass Act which became law last August.

Given a valid dispute as to land boundaries, the proponents of the bill offered the argument that it was necessary to ignore the claim of the Indians in order to save the newsprint industry. They argued that to determine the rights first would take too much time. The most tragic thing about it was that people like Senator Watkins who "doubted the constitutionality of the Act" were influenced by such an argument to withhold objections. . . .

I have passed my copy of COMMENTARY con-

taining Dr. Cohen's article around to all my friends and have recommended it to those whom my copy would not reach. These people, however, are already convinced of the injustice of Congress' present treatment of the Alaskan natives and have been actively working to secure for those natives a square deal. Passage of the Tongass Bill, and the near passage of S. J. Res. 162, the anti-reservation bill, indicates clearly, I fear, that our voices are not strong enough. We are grateful to you and to Dr. Cohen for presenting this obscured problem to your wide audience of people who think on these things—and act accordingly. . . .

N. B. JOHNSON

National Congress of American Indians
Claremore, Oklahoma

Inter-Group Contacts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have read Robert Pick's article, "A Refugee Looks at Anti-Semitism Here," in the September COMMENTARY, with great interest.

It is reassuring to have pointed out, as Mr. Pick does, the essentially friendly attitude of the government to Jews. There are probably some exceptions to this in local and state administrations, but it is a fact for which to be profoundly grateful that anti-Semitism has not been accepted as a political expedient.

Perhaps the surest way to continue that condition is to see that Jews have political opportunity as citizens entirely irrespective of race or religion.

The very personal and dispersed nature of anti-Semitism, as Mr. Pick reveals it, makes it difficult to attack on a broad and general front. Multitudes of isolated incidents may occur and yet most of us from the majority remain entirely uninformed about them. To meet this, continuous effort on the part of members of the majority group to expand normal contacts between Jew and Gentile, plus emphasis on elimination of anti-Semitism in educational institutions—these at least are some of the ways in which the ordinary citizen can contribute to eliminating second-class citizenship in general.

However, there is no security against the spirit of exclusion unless one concerns oneself

with it as it manifests itself against any group—foreigners, Negroes, Jews, or any minority.

CLARENCE E. PICKETT

American Friends Service Committee
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The Statue of Liberty

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In the review by James Rorty of *I Lift My Lamp*, in the September issue, he calls the Statue of Liberty the "ugly, bronze colossus." Two out of three words are incorrect—the statue is of copper and, to those with an appreciation of the monumental arts, it is a great work. Jacques Lipchitz, one of the few sculptors today who can speak with authority on monumental sculpture, has told me he considers the statue symbolically and technically a chef d'oeuvre.

As an architect, I can have nothing but admiration for this simple, bold conception—a pedestal in the waters of a busy harbor, on it a great lighthouse in the form of a noble woman—especially remarkable for having been created in a period of abominable public taste though excellent private taste (we are still in this period). An indicator of Mr. Rorty's understanding of the value of visual art can be seen in his finding this interesting book "completely documented." Imagine a book about a statue with not a picture in it!

PERCIVAL GOODMAN

New York City

Public Higher Education

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I want to compliment Dr. Saveth and COMMENTARY for their extremely useful contribution to the history of higher education in New York State. ("Democratic Education for New York" in the July number.) The enactment by the legislature and the governor, upon the recommendation of the Temporary Commission on the Need for a State University, of this significant new set-up seems to me to mark a turning point in higher public education in New York State. . . . All those who had part in this matter deserve great credit.

I suppose all of us are entitled to some doubts on particulars. I myself, for example, find it hard to believe that the decentralized two year colleges or institutes will develop in sufficient numbers and maintain adequate quality on the basis of fifty per cent local community support. The communities that need these institutes the most are precisely those that are least able economically to support them. Furthermore, since they are designed to be principally technical and vocational, they may

make but a small contribution to what we need the most in contemporary society: a general education in preparation for good citizens.

In the long run, it seems to me that the further development of education in this country, particularly higher education and adult education, must depend upon public support. The religious denominations, with the possible exception of the Roman Catholic Church, are finding it increasingly difficult to operate higher educational institutions at an adequate level of scholarship. I hope there will always be sufficient private support for independent colleges and universities because they are exceedingly necessary in any free system of education, but I think we might as well be prepared for the necessity of calling upon public support for the sustenance of our higher education. The problem then will be to find a formula for public grants of money which will not mix church and state nor cause the private non-sectarian institutions to become politically dependent upon the government, although I do not fear this development as much as most of my colleagues.

BRYN J. HOVDE
President

The New School
New York City

President Truman and Civil Rights

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I find myself in complete accord with James and Nancy Wechsler in their excellent and sound sociological discussion (in the October COMMENTARY) of the problem of civil rights.

This article appears at a most appropriate time and should be of great service. As a Negro worker and a Socialist, I have been active among that minority of my fellow citizens, of all colors and creeds, who are struggling to enlighten the majority to the increasing danger of denying to any group those basic rights upon which life, liberty, and happiness rest. . . . The report of the President's Committee, together with his successful fight for the inclusion in the Democratic party's platform of civil-rights planks, will compel historians of the future to recognize and appreciate his courage. The issues he has raised—regardless of the outcome of the current presidential election—are bound to play an increasingly important role in the affairs of our country. Not even Franklin Roosevelt dared expose himself and his political fortunes to the winds of ignorance, prejudice, and reaction as did Mr. Truman on the issue of civil rights. . . .

FRANK R. CROSSWAITH

Negro Labor Committee
New York City

In Defense of Readability

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The belated review of Mortimer J. Cohen's *Pathways Through the Bible* and Solomon Grayzel's *A History of the Jews*, in your October issue, by David Baumgardt, a consultant in philosophy at the Library of Congress, warrants challenge. It totally disregards the need for, the advantages of, and the splendid results achieved by these two books.

The reviewer's principal complaint is not so much against these books themselves but is a cry against the "ever increasing contemporary tendency" of popularization. Dr. Baumgardt advocates more books for serious students, ignoring the fact that most of us have neither the time nor the inclination to read from cover to cover the 1136 pages required to print the Holy Scriptures, or the seven volumes of history by Graetz and Elbogen.

As Dr. Cohen states in his Foreword, *Pathways* was "not intended to replace the Holy Scriptures in the reading experience of young or adult readers; it is rather to be regarded as preparatory to the reading of the Bible itself. . . . It seeks to hew out pathways through the richly luxuriant and forestlike complexities of the Bible literature, so that the unskilled traveler may find his way through it with ease and with pleasure. . . ."

I have found *Pathways* to be interesting reading, written with charm and simplicity, without minimizing the sacred character of Israel's masterpiece; it is a vivid history of the rise and fall of the Jews which presents these people of ancient days as real, worldly humans with normal emotions and ambitions. In the book's terse prefatory paragraphs, the ethical message of the Bible is stated so lucidly and so profoundly that often more is learned from these short introductions than from a long, learned exposition. Chapter and verse from the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings are collected, transposed, and refined to clarify the history and spiritual development of the Jews from Abraham to Ezra and Nehemiah. *Pathways* has removed the dust of centuries and enables us to see the panorama of the past in clearer perspective.

A non-Jewish friend, who teaches in a local Sunday school, told me he never could grasp the full meaning of the Book of Job. I gave him a copy of *Pathways*. Less than twenty pages enabled him to understand. He, in turn, purchased a copy for his superintendent, who now uses *Pathways* in his classrooms.

What has been written above about *Pathways* applies with equal force to Dr. Grayzel's

History, now used as a textbook in several colleges. A scholarly, readable one-volume history of the Jews is an essential requirement not only for our youth but for such of our elders as are or may become interested in connecting the past with the present. Dr. Grayzel's book admirably fills this need. It is easy to find a few items to criticize in any single volume which seeks to encompass twenty-five centuries of Jewish history in eight hundred pages. A sturdy forest must not be judged by a few branches on an occasional tree.

Dr. Grayzel successfully combines the marshalling of events and thumb-nail sketches of the major personalities with an excellent interpretation of the aspirations and ideals of the Jewish people, applying the technique of modern teaching to demonstrate the continuity of Jewish life through the ages.

These two books merit and have heretofore received the highest praise. Approximately thirty-three thousand copies of *Pathways* have been sold in the past three years, and nineteen thousand copies of Grayzel's *History* in the two years which have elapsed since its publication. Their continued circulation and use will not be prejudiced by an unjustified criticism, which, having been printed as a review by COMMENTARY, should be and hereby is answered by an admirer of COMMENTARY.

EDWARD H. CUSHMAN

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

[There will be a comment on Mr. Cushman's letter by Dr. Baumgardt in our next issue.—ED.]

"Commentary" and Liberalism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am glad as a non-Jewish reader to express to you the great satisfaction I take in reading the pages of COMMENTARY. There is not an issue in which I do not find one and generally at least two articles of the most genuinely stimulating sort.

The word "liberal" means so many things that it may not signify much to say that I find COMMENTARY the most rewarding of all the liberal journals I see. What distinguishes it to my mind is its breadth and the kind of balance that comes only from views free from clichés, *partis pris*, and the declamatory writing that organs of all stripes seem to favor today. There is a sanity about most of the articles in COMMENTARY that comes only from the intellectual and moral soundness of maturity which makes preaching unnecessary.

JOHN DEWEY

New York City

BOOKS IN REVIEW

The Artist and the Family

THE WORLD IS A WEDDING. By DEL-MORE SCHWARTZ. Norfolk, Connecticut, New Directions. 196 pp. \$2.75.

Reviewed by MARTIN GREENBERG

THE literary graces are progressively renounced in this collection. The last line of what I take to be one of the stories earliest composed—the charming “In Dreams Begin Responsibilities”—has this vivid metaphor in it: “. . . I woke up into the bleak winter morning of my 21st birthday, the windowsill shining with its lip of snow. . . .” In the later stories, however, the writing has deliberately been made flat, and figures of speech are of this order: “After five years of the depression, the hopes of most of the boys of the circle had faded slowly like a color or were worn thin like a cloth.”

This severely commonplace style is employed ironically, of course, contemptuously even, as the protagonist of “America! America!” explicitly informs us: “Shenandoah was exhausted by his mother’s story. He was sick of the mood in which he had listened, the irony and the contempt which had taken hold of each new event. He had listened from such a distance that what he saw was an outline, a caricature, and an abstraction. How different it might seem, if he had been able to see these lives from the inside, looking out.”

IN THIS first story in which this style is used extensively, it is more a matter of single words or phrases ironically set off in italics. Later, however, in the short novel entitled “The Child Is the Meaning of This Life,” the finest story of the book, this deliberately pedestrian quality of language pervades the entire sentence, the very structure of the writing, at the same time that the contempt it previously expressed disappears entirely and the irony is considerably softened. The author, that is, succeeds in seeing

“these lives” (the New York Jewish middle class of the first, second, and third generations) more “from the inside, looking out.”

This later style (which is only gradually arrived at in the course of these stories) permits the author both to disavow the life that he describes and to affirm his relation to it; that is its merit, and the merit of the best of these stories. The author ironically surrenders his style to the flat, commonplace language used by the characters of his stories, and by this irony he rejects and flees the desolate world of the Jewish petty bourgeoisie that he evokes. He escapes the captivity of his origins, as it were, by leaving his shirt (his style) behind in their hands. What “Shenandoah Fish, a youthful author of promise,” hero of several of these stories, says of his own work is true of Mr. Schwartz: its “innermost motion” is “flight, or criticism, or denial, or rejection.”

BUT with this style the author is able at the same time to affirm the depth of his relation to the world he has rejected. “And now he [Shenandoah] felt for the first time how closely bound he was to these people. His separation was actual enough, but there existed also an unbreakable unity. As the air was full of the radio and unseen voices, so the life he breathed in was full of these lives and the age in which they had acted and suffered.” For what the artist figure in these stories also rejects is a present life unconnected with the past. When he acknowledges that “the child is the meaning of this life,” he is, in his own way, the Jew returning to himself, seeking himself in his childish past.

This past cannot be summoned up in the manner of a Henry James or a Sir Osbert Sitwell; nor on the other hand could one write like Clifford Odets or in a genre of some kind of Jewish regionalism and say what these stories say. The commonplace style, though ironically employed, is also, paradoxically, a bare and brilliant poetry (the author recovers his lost

shirt) in which the sense of this past is captured and celebrated.

Judging from the present book, however, the uses to which this style can be put are limited. When it is used, in "The World Is a Wedding," to describe a circle of friends—a study in the lack of "true community"—the effect is simply one of tedium. In the stories of Jewish family life, the style reduces that life to its elemental events and the story has a saga-like and portentous flow, as the book jacket correctly remarks. In this story, however, the style sentimentally reduces the friends to their individual unhappinesses and lonelinesses, the narrative drags, and it all dissolves into mawkishness.

The other stories in the book are not nearly so interesting. "New Year's Eve" is a venture into Hecate County; "A Bitter Farce" is one of those college classroom stories which English professors and English students both seem to delight in writing; and "The Statues" is a lame flight of fancy that ought never to have been taken into the book.

It needs to be noted that the proofreading of this book is atrocious. I suspect the publishers of feeling that, so long as the Direction is New, a slovenly product, technically, is a quite insignificant detail.

Kreplach

A TREASURY OF JEWISH FOLKLORE. Edited by Nathan Ausubel. New York, Crown. 741 pp. \$4.00.

Reviewed by ISAAC ROSENFELD

MR. AUSUBEL'S anthology contains some excellent items of folklore, but much of it—with the unquestionable exception of some sixty-five songs, music included, and stories such as the one I shall paraphrase first—is not folklore at all, which by his own definition is "a vivid record of a people, palpitating with life itself. . . ." The fault is solely the anthologist's, whose sense of life seems to run toward being the "life of the party." This turns his treasury, in large part, into a joke book and causes his notion of folklore to trail off into popular culture, where the elements are not necessarily "folk" in character.

THE distinction can best be shown by direct example. "Joseph della Reyna Storms Heaven,"

taken from a Yiddish *groschen* chapbook, is authentic folklore. Rabbi della Reyna, "seeing that there were in Jerusalem so many pious men who sought God and loved truth," decided to try to force the Messiah to come down to earth.

He called to himself five learned disciples and together they retired to the wilderness to fast, pray, and purify their bodies. There, in a dream, Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai, the teacher of all the Cabalists and author of the *Zohar*, and his son Eleazar appeared before Joseph della Reyna to warn him against rashness; but they were convinced of his pure intention and gave him their blessing. Rabbi Joseph, through further devotions, summoned before him Elijah the Prophet, who also tried to dissuade him from his enterprise, but he, too, was overcome by the Rabbi's piety. Then, after weeks of prayer, fasting, purification, and Cabalistic rites, Joseph brought down from Heaven the Angel Sandalfon who guards the way along which the prayers of the righteous mount to God. Sandalfon referred him to the Angel Metatron who resides in the Seventh Heaven, next the Throne, and has been assigned by God to keep the power of Satan in check.

Both Angels appeared among fire and whirlwind, together with all their hosts. At last the Angel Metatron, whose face is more dazzling than the sun, unable to weaken Joseph's determination, revealed to him, while the earth shook and lightning struck, the Ineffable Name of God, formed of seventy-two characters, by means of which he could obtain power over Satan and Lilith, drive all the evil from the world, and bring about the coming of the Messiah. But the Angel warned him to show no pity for evil and to give Satan and his wife neither food nor a smell of the strong spices with which Joseph and his disciples, no longer taking food, were sustaining themselves. There was great rejoicing in Heaven. Elijah the Prophet began to practice mighty blasts on the *shofar* to announce the coming of the Messiah, and the Messiah himself led his white horse out of the Heavenly Stable, to prepare for the descent. On top of Mount Sheir, Joseph and his disciples encountered Satan and Lilith and their legions, disguised as wild dogs. The holy men overpowered them with the Ineffable Name and mystic formulae and bound the dogs, whereupon they assumed human form, though

with wings and fiery eyes. Satan and Lilith begged for food, but Rabbi Joseph remembered the warning against showing pity for evil.

"'Help us! Give us something to eat! We're dying of hunger!' Still Rabbi Joseph della Reyna hardened his heart against them. . . . 'At least give us a smell of your spices or we perish!'"

"Now Rabbi Joseph was a compassionate man. He could not endure the sight of suffering in man or beast. Having triumphed over Satan and Lilith he thought he could now safely show a small measure of magnanimity towards them. He therefore gave them some of the strong spices to smell. Immediately tongues of searing flame shot from their nostrils. All their former strength returned to them. They tore away their bonds and summoned to their aid hosts of shrieking demons and devils. Two of the disciples immediately died of terror. Two of them went out of their minds and wandered away. Only Rabbi Joseph and one disciple remained.

"The angels in Heaven went into mourning, the Prophet Elijah put away the great *shofar* of the Redemption, and the Messiah sadly led his white horse back into the stable. Then God declared, 'Pay heed, O Joseph della Reyna! No human has the power to end the Exile! I alone, God, will hasten the Redemption of the Jewish People when the right times comes!'"

AND this is "*Kreplach*":

"A Jewish mother was much distressed over the problem of her young son who was afraid to eat the popular dish known as *kreplach*. She took him to a psychiatrist for consultation. After hearing the case, the doctor said, 'Now, madam, this is very simple. Take the boy home, take him out into the kitchen, and show him the ingredients that go into the dish. And then show him how *kreplach* are made. This should probably eliminate the condition.'"

"Hopefully the mother followed his advice. On the kitchen table she put out a small square of dough beside which was a small mound prepared of chopped meat. 'Now,' she said, 'there's nothing here you should mind.' The lad beamed and nodded encouragingly. The mother then put the meat into the center of the dough and folded over one corner. The boy smiled and all seemed to be going well. She folded over the second corner and the third. The boy was nodding and the experiment seemed to be progressing most favorably. Then

she folded over the fourth and final corner; whereupon the boy groaned and muttered, 'Oi, *kreplach!*'"

Now this is a good story (it's better if you have the boy scream), but the truth about it is, it's a Jewish Joke, one of hundreds of thousands (and of about one thousand that Mr. Ausubel includes in his anthology), and it marks the turning point of folklore into something else. Not because it deals with a psychiatrist—and such a poor one; the man's obviously a fraud—instead of a rabbi, but because it lacks particular relevance to the Jews as a folk. It's anyone's story, though, no doubt, of Jewish invention. But the fact of invention is not enough to establish the position of an item in folklore. A characteristic theme of basic concern to the folk must be present, which I can't see here, nor in most of the other jokes that Mr. Ausubel uses. This seems to me, rather, an example of the Jewish popular culture which circulates through society at large; and once you get into popular culture, it's hard to stay clear of commercial culture, of Broadway and Hollywood and radio gags, to which this anthology frequently comes close.

BUT in fairness to Mr. Ausubel, I must say that "*Kreplach*" is curiously related to "Joseph della Reyna Storms Heaven." To begin with, it is pure Cabala. Then, both stories have to do with rabbis—if you please—and with food. Food, in both, has magical significance—which is scarcely odd in Jewish culture, where food is surrounded with rituals and taboos. And the Devil is a common element, because *kreplach* is devil's food. This follows from the symbolism of *kreplach*, which is anal. First, the word itself. The *kr* and *ch* sounds in Yiddish are deeply guttural, produced with a sound of phlegm, and the whole word, even without its component Anglo-Saxon pun, is plainly faecal in character. So also is the chopped meat, particularly when the *kreplach* are done. Now faeces, as any child knows, is devil's food (and adults have given the name of devil's food to a heavy, moist cake made of darkest chocolate). Now our child in the joke, when he beholds the food from which the devil draws his strength (*kreplach*), has good reason to show fright. The connection with what happened on top of Mount Sheir is obvious, for didn't two of the disciples die of terror and two go out of their minds?

The lad is not so crazy, after all.

Introducing the Bible

THE BOOK OF BOOKS: An Introduction.
By SOLOMON GOLDMAN. New York,
Harper and Brothers. 459 pp. \$3.75.

Reviewed by DAVID DAICHES

THIS is the first of an ambitiously conceived series of thirteen volumes planned by Rabbi Goldman to deal with the origins, development, influence, and interpretation of the Hebrew Bible. Dr. Goldman has both the scholarship and the enthusiasm to carry out this immense task, most timely in an age when the Bible is far too little read by either Jews or Christians.

Dr. Goldman is fully aware of the immense influence of the Bible on Western culture. If only for this reason the projected series on the "book of books" should prove an invaluable aid to the study of our civilization, whose "great books" are now being so assiduously rediscovered in the humanities courses of our colleges and universities. Such courses do not, however, provide their students with the equipment for Bible study to the extent that they do for a study of the Greco-Roman origins of Western culture, and there is still a feeling among our young intellectuals that it is reactionary to study the Bible. Dr. Goldman proposes to remedy this situation with a quite breath-taking thoroughness.

This introductory volume to the series is a fighting document—indeed, it could be argued that its tone is too belligerent, and the author fairly batters the reader with proofs and proclamations of the Bible's magnificence and uniqueness. The opening chapter, on the Hebrew language, is clear and informative, if not especially original. The third chapter, on the Hebrew Canon, is a sound if brief introduction to that aspect of the subject. Chapter four, tracing the development of the "higher criticism," moves rapidly and pugnaciously over the field, ending with a persuasive destruction of Wellhausen. The most eloquent chapter of all is the fifth, where Dr. Goldman goes all out to destroy Breasted's arguments on the superiority of Egyptian civilization and its influence on the Hebrew: this makes good reading—the passion is informed by scholarship and wit, and by the end of the argument the reader can scarce forbear to cheer.

The book, however, has serious weaknesses, illustrated in some degree by the second chapter, more fully and obviously in the sixth, and in the long section (about half of the actual text of the book) entitled "Echoes and Allusions." Dr. Goldman cannot refrain from studying his pages with comparisons, allusions, quotations, and references which rarely add to the argument and often simply annoy or bewilder the reader.

Even if we grant the quotations from Greek literature in chapter two (where the Hebrew attitude to art is defended against that of the Greeks) to be well chosen and relevant (and that is granting a great deal), the extraordinary hodge-podge of quotations referring to the Bible in the "Echoes and Allusions" section is absolutely baffling. There seems to be no principle of selection here at all, but only a wild and unequal mass of texts. For example, we have, under the wholly unilluminating heading "White Man," an ironical Bantu proverb: "At first we had the land and the white man had the Bible. Now we have the Bible and the white man has the land." A couple of pages further on, under "Miscellaneous," we find:

*Congleton rare, Congleton rare,
sold the Bible to pay for a bear.*
—Ray, *Proverbs*.

QUOTATIONS from letters to the author from minor contemporary writers form a considerable part of this strange assortment. Joseph Wood Krutch writes that the Bible (presumably the King James version) is "one of the masterpieces of English literature." Stuart Chase opines that "it is a profound source of literary stimulation." Lancelot Hogben writes that he earned his pocket money as a boy by learning biblical verses by heart, but adds: "Whether this is a good line of sales talk from your viewpoint is problematical." All this, and innumerable other remarks, some of the utmost triviality and many only referring to the Bible incidentally or indirectly, Dr. Goldman solemnly prints.

The authors whose remarks on the Bible are quoted seem to have been picked out completely at random. For example, one of E. N. S. Thompson's essays on Milton is cited, stating that Milton thought highly of the Bible. But nowhere are any of Milton's own eloquent statements about the Bible quoted. Cecil B.

De Mille is quoted as saying: "You can take any fifty pages of the Bible and make a good picture." Perhaps the prize quotation is from William Rose Benét's letter to the author; it says, simply: "I often get great pleasure in reading the King James Version." Here is the final quotation of the series—from Quentin Reynolds' *Officially Dead*: "I would have cheerfully lied to Kawai, or to any other Jap officer, and lied on a stack of Bibles, but all the time I was in prison I never found it useful to lie."

Is it contempt for the intelligence of the "average reader" or an unbecoming sense of inner insecurity about the ability of the Bible to stand up on its own feet that makes the author feel that he needs endorsements from "celebrities" to bolster his case? Does modern biblical apologetics need to be that apologetic? "Echoes and Allusions" takes up pages 128 to 355 of a book which has over a hundred pages of notes and bibliography: it is, in fact, by far the most substantial portion of the actual text of the book. What a pity that this fantastic *tsimus* should loom so large in an otherwise interesting book.

One might object also to the confusing ways in which the same work is referred to in different places. How is the ordinary reader to know that the "Book of the Wars of the Lord," referred to on page 27, is the same as *Milhamot ha-Shem* mentioned on page 54? And why the coyness of *ha-Shem* (i.e., "the name," the traditional Jewish way of referring to JHWH, the name of God, in ordinary discourse) when the pages of the book are studded with the tetragrammaton JHWH?

The bibliography is magnificent—too magnificent, since almost every conceivable work dealing with the Bible and its influence is cited, and the reader is given no inkling of the degree of importance or relevance of each. Next after the Palestinian Talmud comes Parrington's *Main Currents in American Thought*, and sandwiched between Jakob's *Der Penta-teuch* and Jampel's *Wiederherstellung Israels unter den Achaeminiden* we find James' *Art of the Novel*.

If Rabbi Goldman wishes to do fuller justice to his great erudition and magnificent zeal in matters biblical, he will do well in the future volumes of this series to quote less from others and give us, in that direct style he can employ so effectively when he desires, the results of his own researches and meditations.

Lost Poet

THE PISAN CANTOS. By EZRA POUND.
New York, New Directions. 118 pp.
\$2.75.

Reviewed by WILLIAM POSTER

TO GET at what Ezra Pound is and was, we have to see him as one of the leaders of a revolution in aesthetic sensibility, his talent geared to it and even created by it. This revolution of the 20's brought into modern English literature the ferment of other cultures, an awareness of its own remote past, and the new effects developed in 19th-century French verse. It seems clear by now that, whatever his greatness, Pound's work falls largely within a derivative category which in almost any other period would have been the province of second-rate personalities. It is only the importance of this category at a particular time that accounts for the phenomenon of a genius developing within it.

For Pound has been not so much a great, originating poet as a kind of great re-creator, translator, and appreciator, of such power as to require a vast range of cultures and languages for his efforts. The organization of his personality about this one talent seems to have been so complete, and this one talent was so monumentally insufficient to serve just the needs and desires it was bound to generate, as to have made his subsequent activities almost inevitable.

It is, perhaps, the excessive purity of his poetic sensibility that is most responsible for some of Pound's frustrations and lack of fulfillment as an original poet. For great poetry requires a number of extra-poetic powers: those which go to form a total view of life without which creativity must invariably wane or be misdirected. These the poet may contain within himself or have supplied to him by a society with which he is in harmony (Coleridge is probably the best example of the former class; Shakespeare, of the latter). Both factors were lacking in Pound's case. It was from this unique situation that the *Cantos* emerged, as confused and uneven a work of art as ever became a fructifying influence on a whole generation of writers.

The *Cantos* can best be understood as the epic of pure aesthetic consciousness (prosperity's

most real orchid) attempting to mirror the totality of European culture broadening out into world culture as it decomposes. It is a nihilistic epic because the kind of consciousness that is most fundamental to it is inimical to every species of definite meaning. It is, therefore, devoid of any continuous or climactic action.

The adventure is in the writing and the meaning is in the style, which is the sole principle of organization—or disorganization, depending on whether it is holding itself together braced against chaos, depicting chaos, or being invaded by chaos. In an ultimate sense, the subject of the Cantos is chaos, the jungle that grows over all the temporary clearings of history:

Jungle:

*Glaze green and red feathers, jungle,
Basis of renewal, renewals;
Rising over the soul, green virid, of the jungle,
Lozenge of the pavement, clear shapes,
Broken, disrupted, body eternal,
Wilderness of renewals. . . .*

Accordingly, fragments of history, philosophy, translations, anecdotes, scraps of conversation, personal feelings, and opinions are set against and into each other in such a manner that each is heard in its own voice, part of a clashing polyphony, free from the artificial arrangements imposed by the practical bias of intelligence. To some extent, the objective is plainly an *ignis fatuus*, for the escape into chaos is impossible and the more we try to flee from the nets of meaning and convention the more tightly they are drawn about us. The jungle (pure chaos, formless fertility) is itself a logical fiction. Yet it remains unquestionable that the jungle is an element of life, inside and outside us, and one that must be concentrated on to the degree that the values by which men live are insufficient and threaten creative vitality.

THE PISAN CANTOS are the anticlimax to the epic rather than a part of it, poetry of a wholly different order from that of the earlier Cantos because they have been trapped by a situation which gives them, willynilly, a definite, determinate content. In the earlier Cantos one cannot concentrate too much on Pound's thoughts or his personal feelings because the strategy of the poem directs one toward what the style is doing to them and everything else.

In *The Pisan Cantos*, the fact that the poet is sitting in a jail in Italy charged with treason dominates the poetry, gives it a context which changes all its angles not only for the reader but for the poet as he composes. The poet cannot escape his social, biographic identity any more than he can escape the charge against him (the two are not unrelated), and *The Pisan Cantos* become what the Cantos always tended to become, a collection of musings—the musings of a man with a great craftsman's ability to handle cadences and tones, a great deal of learning, next to no ability to think consecutively, and so undeveloped emotionally in relation to events outside the arts that when he does try to express his feelings it is either in a painfully diffident fashion or with the clumsy willed violence of a park orator.

WHENEVER the logic of a poem forces Pound to speak in his own person, a kind of insecurity afflicts him which prevents him from holding forth on any subject for more than three or four lines. This is true almost throughout *The Pisan Cantos*, and if there are fewer sustained, eloquent passages than are to be found in the earlier Cantos, there is also nothing like the ugly coprophiliac release that takes place in Canto XIV. For Pound, this is, indeed, mild-mannered poetry with occasional moments of self-castigation and such plaintive remonstrances as "Oh let an old man rest." There are some three or four anti-Semitic remarks, some fatigued pro-Mussolini statements, and some monotonous repetitions of the Social Credit proverbs to which Pound has been giving entranced utterance for some two decades—all of which are so incoherent, so twisted by Pound's habitual irony (if one did not know on which side he was, it would often be impossible to tell from the text), so utterly devoid of everything that should go into a significant belief, that, in order to discuss them critically, one would have to begin by attributing more sense to them than they actually have. It is indicative of the nature of Pound's beliefs that, with all his clamorous hatred of war-profiteering, dishonesty, "perverters of language," he should have chosen to admire Mussolini, the embodiment of nearly all the vices, a pathological coward, a venal intellectual mountebank who changed his stand on Italy's entry into the First World War solely as the result of a French bribe.

As for any real attempt by the poet to analyze

himself, to reconsider his past or judge his present, there is nothing of this in *The Pisan Cantos*. There are reflections on everything under the sun, some trivial, some preposterous, and some interesting as a craftsman's and scholar's observations. There is a good deal of chatty reminiscence that lacks most of the obvious values such writing may have because Pound does not have a relation to experience that makes for wit or insight but is, at his best, taken up with what is irreducible and random. The reminiscence does, however, have its special appeal to sensibility, as do the *collages* of historical data, the scraps of the conversations of Pound's fellow-prisoners, and the facts of his prison life.

THE key to Pound's personality and career is, I think, to be found in the fact that, like many great poets, he was a man with an essentially conventional and passive mind. Since the conventions he found himself under were ruinous to creativity, a rebellion was in order. But since he was unable to *think* unconventionally and discover principles of reconstruction, the revolt passed over into self-destructive, nihilistic hatred of all systematic thought whatsoever, precisely the kind of hatred out of which Facism made a program.

What is historically valid in the *Cantos* results from Pound's ability to bring the deep, inexplicable forces that go towards the making of a style into a destructive relation to what was exhausted in the European cultural scheme and constricting in the American. What is faulty comes from his inability to discriminate what was still viable in both, to use it, and add to it.

How much ultimate value, how much "renewal" there is in Pound's effort to restore to modern consciousness a jungle awareness, an almost infra-human sense of chaos and fertility, is something to be determined in the future, just as it is a possibility that Pound's uncerebral arrangements of history (precisely because they are so wrong schematically) may ultimately disclose a validity below rather than above the level of awareness we are accustomed to.

Meanwhile, the *Cantos* are a work which poets will, I think, return to again and again, if only for the rhythms moving like tides beneath the laconically elegant style and for the authentic recreation of some of the lambent, forgotten epochs in the history of man.

Herbie

THE CITY BOY. By HERMAN WOUK.
New York, Simon and Schuster. 306
pp. \$2.95.

Reviewed by NATHAN GLICK

BOOKS like *Tom Sawyer* and *Penrod* contain a partially authentic mythology which serves to link the adult to his past and to ritualize for the young reader his fantastic real world. The impregnable barrier between the adult and the child remains, but this literature preserves some of the qualities they share, and, more important, it represents a devotional gesture which is momentarily visible over the barrier. The persistent identification with *Tom Sawyer* and *Penrod* among young city readers who never walked barefoot in the streets or handled worms, testifies to the essential, the classic, accuracy of their stories: nothing there is alien to the imaginative reality of most American children.

The City Boy is an attempt, rare enough and admirable in intent, to embrace in the realm of this popular literature the child of the metropolis, and more specifically a Jewish boy of the East Bronx. Herbie Bookbinder, eleven, is no hero of the streets of his borough. He is fat, a mediocrity in athletics, and obtuse to baseball batting averages. Being bright in school (and Bronx schools being what they are), his alienation is accelerated by "skipping," which, naturally enough, leads to his having dinner out with his father and his father's partners in the ice business. Summer arrives and Herbie is sent to Camp Manitou, run on a basis of crude economy and aggressive psychology by the principal of PS 50. He becomes involved in the inspired competitions and by desperate exertions wins the Mardi Gras award ("Skipper of the Day"). The bubble of camp spirit bursts and its victims return to the city.

THE fictional, or even autobiographical, possibilities of these structural events are clearly boundless, and so far largely unexplored. The public elementary school, the home and business life of a lower middle-class Jewish family, the role of the vacant lot as a reminder of original nature in the caverns of the city, the fetish and the actuality of "the country" in urban Jewish existence, the impact of the summer camp on transplanted city youth—of such

materials epics are made. Instead, Herman Wouk has composed a radio serial full of "funny" and standardized situations (for five years, we are told, he was a writer for Fred Allen). In a foreword, he is driven to insist that "the truth may be pleasant," possibly because he himself sensed the book's hollow ring without understanding its source.

The City Boy is bad (and therefore untrue) not because it tries to be pleasant—though it tries too hard—but because it is not serious either about pleasure or sorrow. Nothing in Herbie's world is left to stand in its own significance, neither place nor event, but must be tamed and smothered in a rhetoric that is tolerant, condescending, "adult." The school athlete is "a natural leader of boys," compositions are "wrung from the urchins," empty lots appeal to "the palate of boyhood."

The vision of one's past revealed by such rhetoric makes impossible any evocation of the world of an eleven-year-old or any fresh understanding gained by distance and detachment. What would Herbie think of his romantic emotions being described (three times) as a "broken heart," or of "Herbie, you see, was one of those privileged beings of the school world, a head monitor," or of his "gallantly" tying a girl's monitor band around her arm? Or, for that matter, what adult can recall any occasion where an interchange between teacher and seventh-grade student resulted in "the boys pounding his back, shaking his hand, and assuring him with various curses that 'he was a regular guy, after all'?"

IN HIS Penrod books, Booth Tarkington knew and caught the child's insular resistance to adults and adult standards. If his picture of small town life was in many ways conventional and easily nostalgic, at least he kept a straight face and a firm, wry control over his editorial interpolation when Penrod, Sam, Herman, and Verman were concerned. Mark Twain never entirely stopped *being* a child and what there is of sentimentality in his portrait of Tom Sawyer derives from the wish-fulfilling fantasies of a participant unfortunately no longer only a child.

In *The City Boy*, despite a fertile recall of incident, there is an almost complete loss of the quality of early experience. This kind of childhood "amnesia," as Ernest Schachtel has observed, is rooted in the same conformism and institutionalization that prevents the adult from

experiencing even his present life vividly or spontaneously. Instead of the raw experience, he knows only its predigested equivalent: the flat, undifferentiated, and falsifying myth sanctified by popular culture and the habit of emotional lethargy. Mr. Wouk has been content to trace just this platitudinous surface; the life behind the myth lies undisturbed outside the pages of his novel.

Innocent Abroad: 1948 Model

FROM THE HEART OF EUROPE. By F. O. MATTHIESSEN. New York, Oxford University Press. 194 pp. \$3.00.

Reviewed by BENJAMIN ENGEL

DURING the latter half of 1947, F. O. Matthiessen, noted literary critic, Harvard professor, and unofficial mediator between East and West, visited a number of European countries to lecture on American literature and learn what he could of the parlous state of the world. The miscellany of notes and reflections now published is a fairly typical product of a not uncommon type of intellectual. For despite the delicate reservations concerning Communist "tactics," despite "the conflict between my enduring belief in socialism and some of the grave shortcomings of the present Soviet state," despite an awareness that the Communists are "doubtless . . . putting me down as an outdated middle-class intellectual," this is the work of a man who faces toward the East. It is, in fact, this very luxury of scruples, this fastidious, softly spoken deprecation of totalitarian methods, a deprecation that does not challenge totalitarianism in principle, which marks the orientation. In discussing the Communist seizure of power in Prague, Mr. Matthiessen writes: "The tension generated between the Truman Doctrine and the Cominform produced for Czechoslovakia more sudden and drastic effects even than I had feared." But generated and produced by whom?

Mr. Matthiessen pursues a vision so transcendental that he can see, through the disturbing actualities, the rise of a people's democracy where others see only the triumph of a uniquely thorough repression. The brute facts of repression do not altogether escape his notice but he records them mechanically, without emotion, without recognition of their human significance. Eventually, he waves them aside with

the slightly mad and indulgent smile of a man believing himself possessed of the innermost secret of history. "I accept the Russian Revolution as the most progressive event of our century," writes Mr. Matthiessen. In the very next breath he grants that "it was unfortunate that our revolution had to take place in Russia, a country backward in economic and political development, with a brutal tradition of Czarist oppression and of secret police which could hardly fail to leave some disfiguring mark on its immediate successors. But we do not have the luxury of choice in place and conditions for a revolution." In brief, the Czar is to blame for Stalin's misdeeds, but Mr. Matthiessen wishes it to be clearly understood that he is himself a man of considerably greater refinement than either.

The Russian version of democracy, as viewed from this dialectical Olympus, is not hostile to that of the West but only different in point of emphasis. Theirs is an economic democracy, ours "only" a political one. The fellow-traveler perceives the tyranny of concentrated wealth but he is blind to the tyranny of concentrated political power. He does not see the utter absurdity of the notion of a democratic terror.

It is futile to examine at length the intellectual bases of the attachment to Soviet Russia, for it is essentially a neurotic one. Consider Mr. Matthiessen, a man of sensibility, one who is profoundly fearful of "the tragedy that ensues when man conceives proudly of himself as pitted against the mass, instead of finding the fulfilment of his nature through interdependence with his fellow man." He could find fulfilment, apparently, by joining the *French Communist party* but he remains outside the *American party* because he is a Christian, "not through upbringing but by conviction," and he professes to find any materialism inadequate. A trifling

inconsistency. More telling, however, is the confession that he does not join the American party because "It has made hardly any progress, during more than a quarter of a century, in enlisting real mass support. . . . No progressive party can carry real weight unless it is solidly rooted in the labor movement." (In the jargon of a few years ago, this myth would have been: *The people are the trolley car of History. He who has not grasped the fact that one cannot be a motorman without a trolley car has understood nothing of the proletarian revolution.*)

But there is something else in this complex emotional makeup, not just the myth of Marx's massed proletarian phalanx, not just the conviction that the righteous cannot afford to be few in number. There is a barely concealed awe and admiration of power, of boldness, of everything antithetical to innocuous middle-class anonymity. The Communists emanate "the energy that comes from knowing where you want to go." Their methods may not be palatable but, unlike the slow-moving *morally inhibited* liberals or socialists, they "get things done." (*But why must Communists always be so harsh? Because revolution is a serious business.*)

Mr. Matthiessen is a man of culture and a man of letters, yet the journal is written in the curiously flat, colorless, almost trance-like style of the intellectual paraphrasing the bureaucrat. "Whatever objective reasons compelled towards socialism in the nineteen-thirties," Mr. Matthiessen writes with his eye on backsliders like Koestler, Dos Passos, and Hicks, "seem even more compelling now, and it is the responsibility of the intellectual to rediscover and rearticulate that fact." The dry academic reprimand here may or may not have a commissarial edge; but the tone is, beyond doubt, devoid of respect for the authentic responsibility of the intellect.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

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